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Tristar's Panzer IV Ausf D

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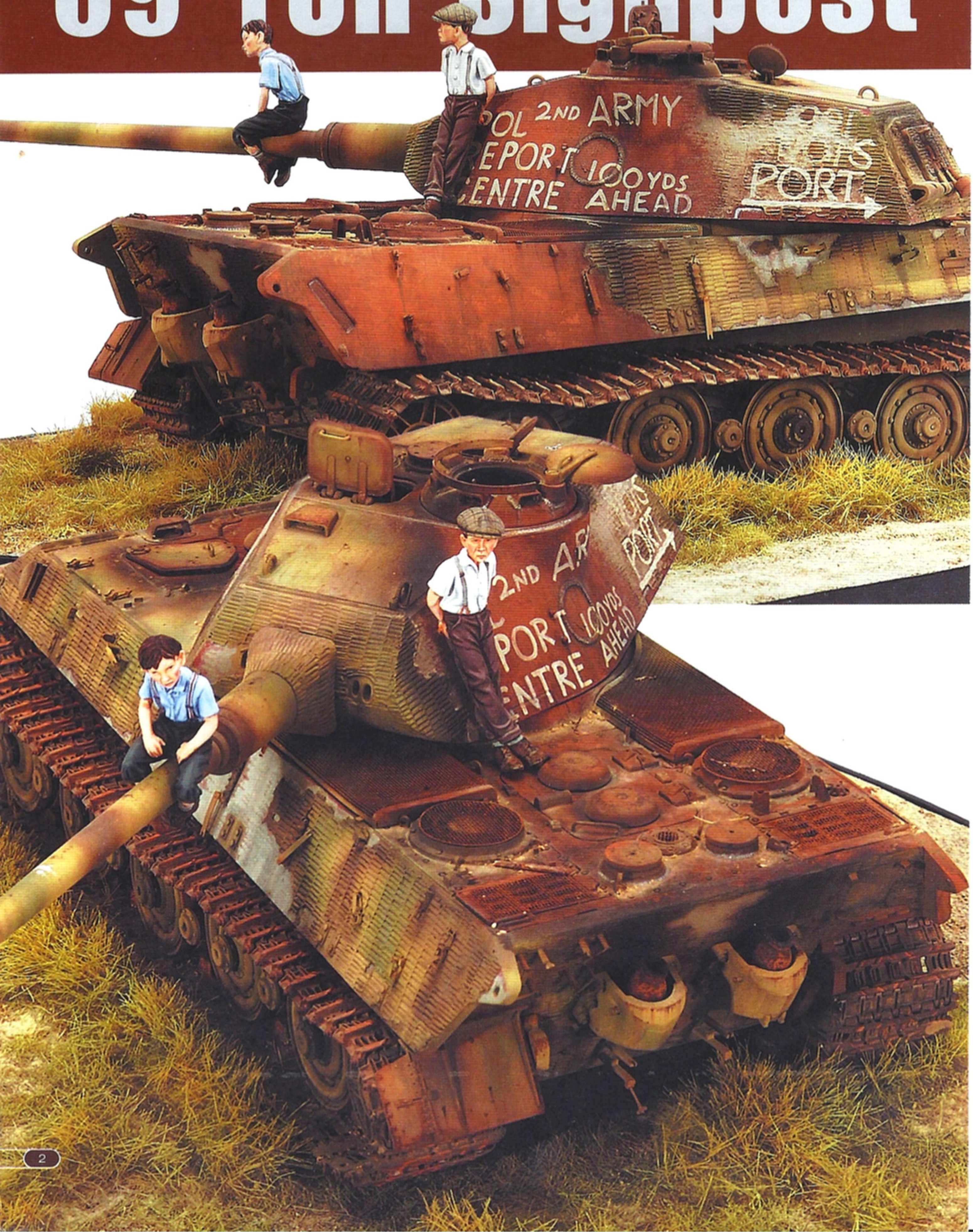
69 Ton Signpost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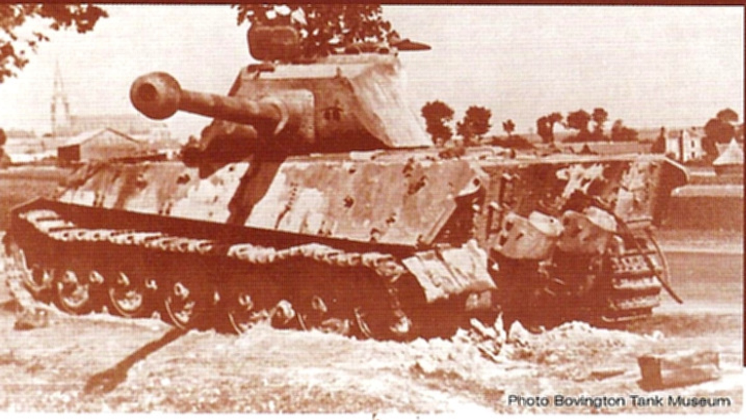


Photo Bovington Tank Museum

Dragon's Porsche King Tiger Modelled by David Parker

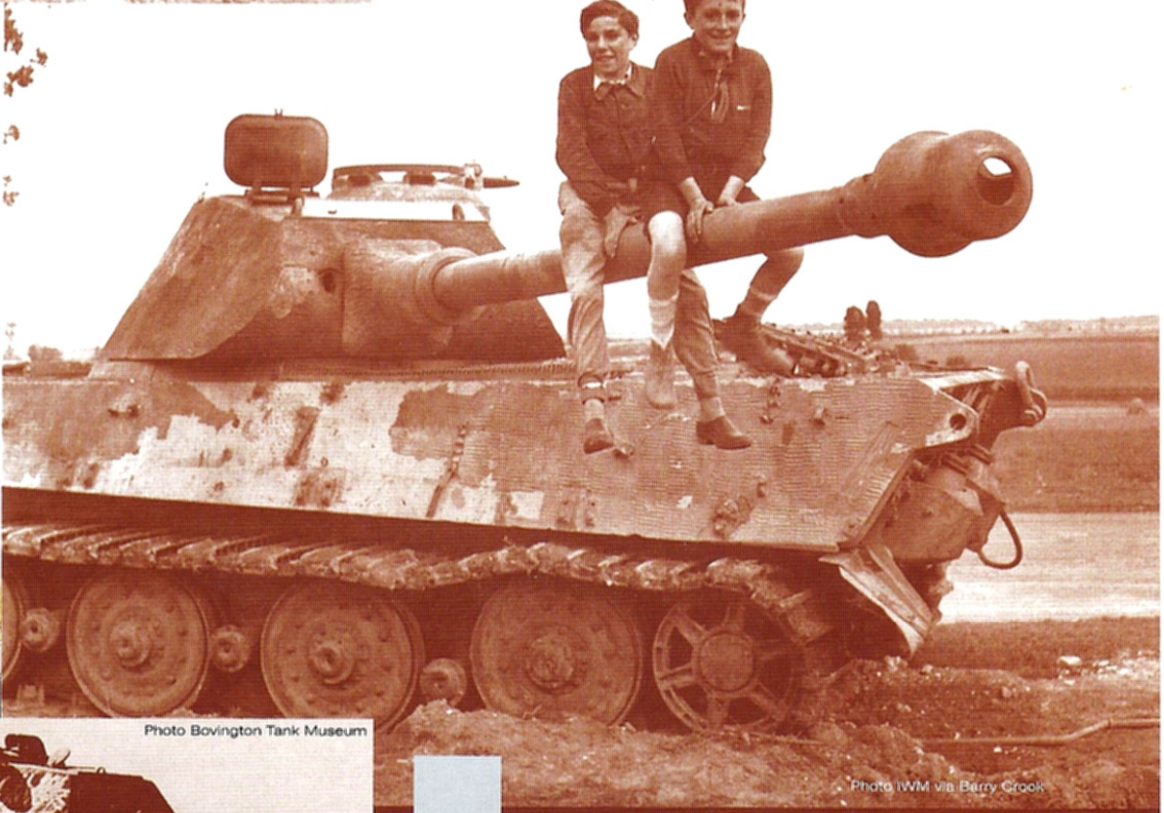
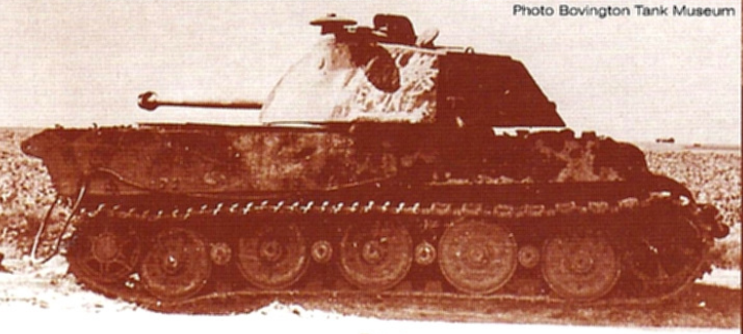
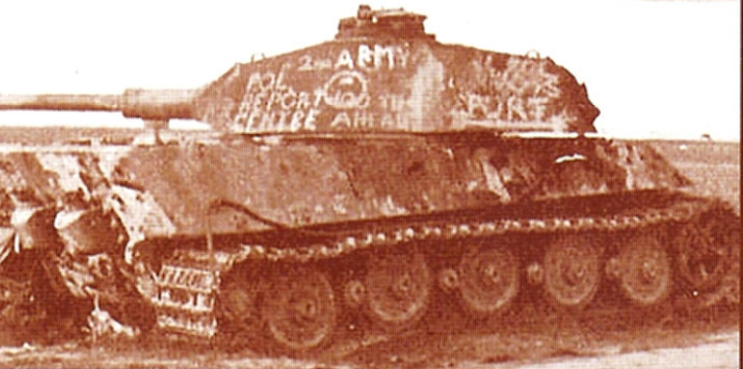


Photo IWM via Barry Crook

Photo Bovington Tank Museum





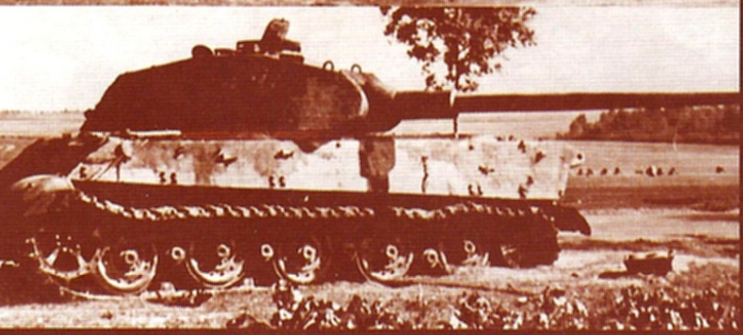


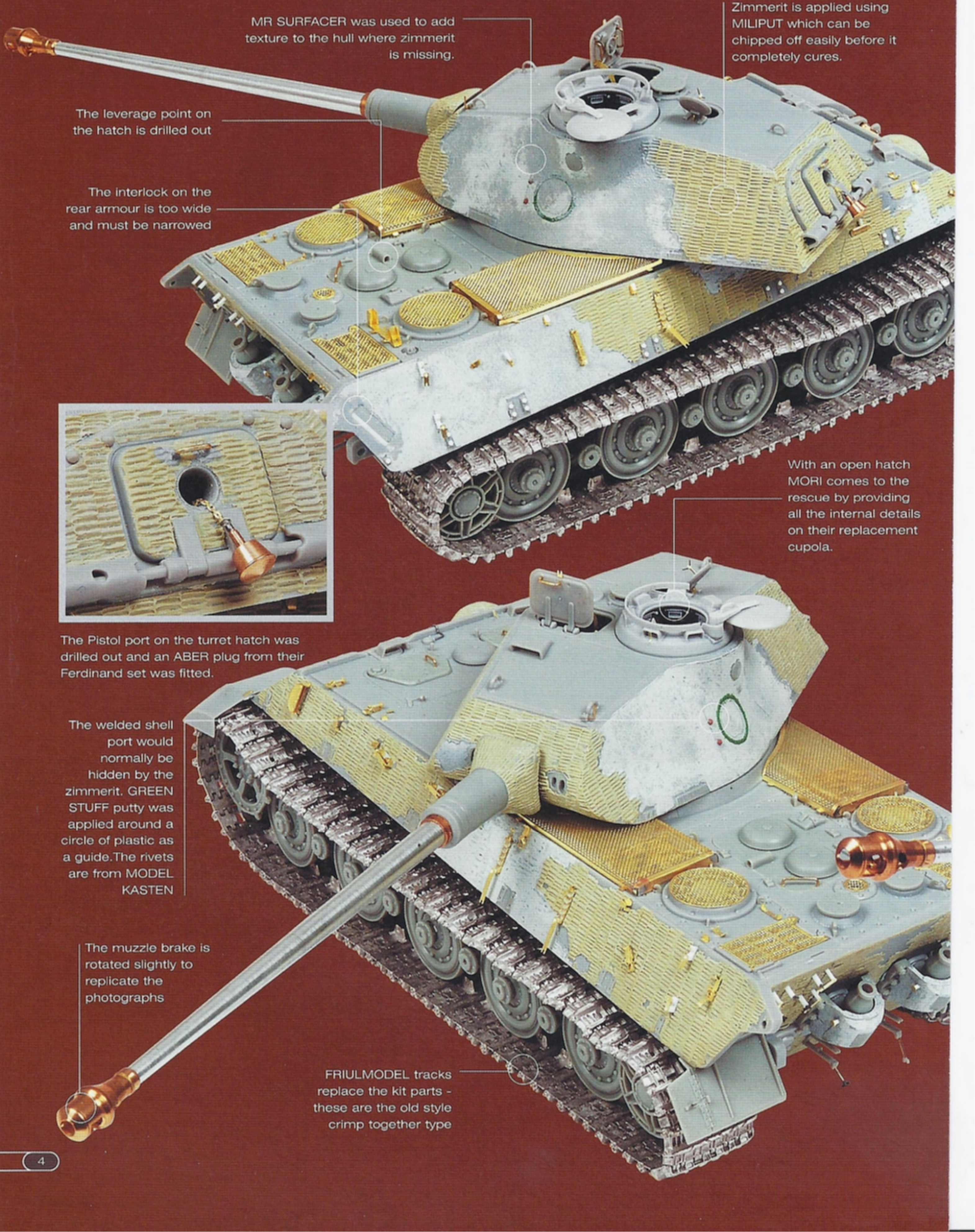
Photo Bovington Tank Museum

nspiration can come upon you quite suddenly. I had always liked an image of an abandoned Porsche King Tiger with its turret turned to the rear when I came across another picture of the same vehicle with 2 boys sitting astride the gun. Very quickly I had managed to uncover a further series of pictures giving an all round view of the tank and showing that the vehicle had been used as an improvised signpost by the advancing Allies and I was inspired.

The particular Tiger had served with the 3rd company of PzAbt 503 and has been tentatively identified as '311'. It appears to have broken down during the retreat from Normandy and to have been scuttled by its crew. Given its thorough photographic coverage I would speculate that it must have been one of the first examples that the advancing Allies came across.

The release of Dragon's new Porsche King Tiger was all the excuse I needed to begin and at about the same time Andrea released their figure set of the two boys which seemed ideal for my purposes.

69 Ton Signpost **Construction**



MR SURFACER was used to add texture to the hull where zimmerit is missing.

Zimmerit is applied using MILIPUT which can be chipped off easily before it completely cures.

The leverage point on the hatch is drilled out

The interlock on the rear armour is too wide and must be narrowed

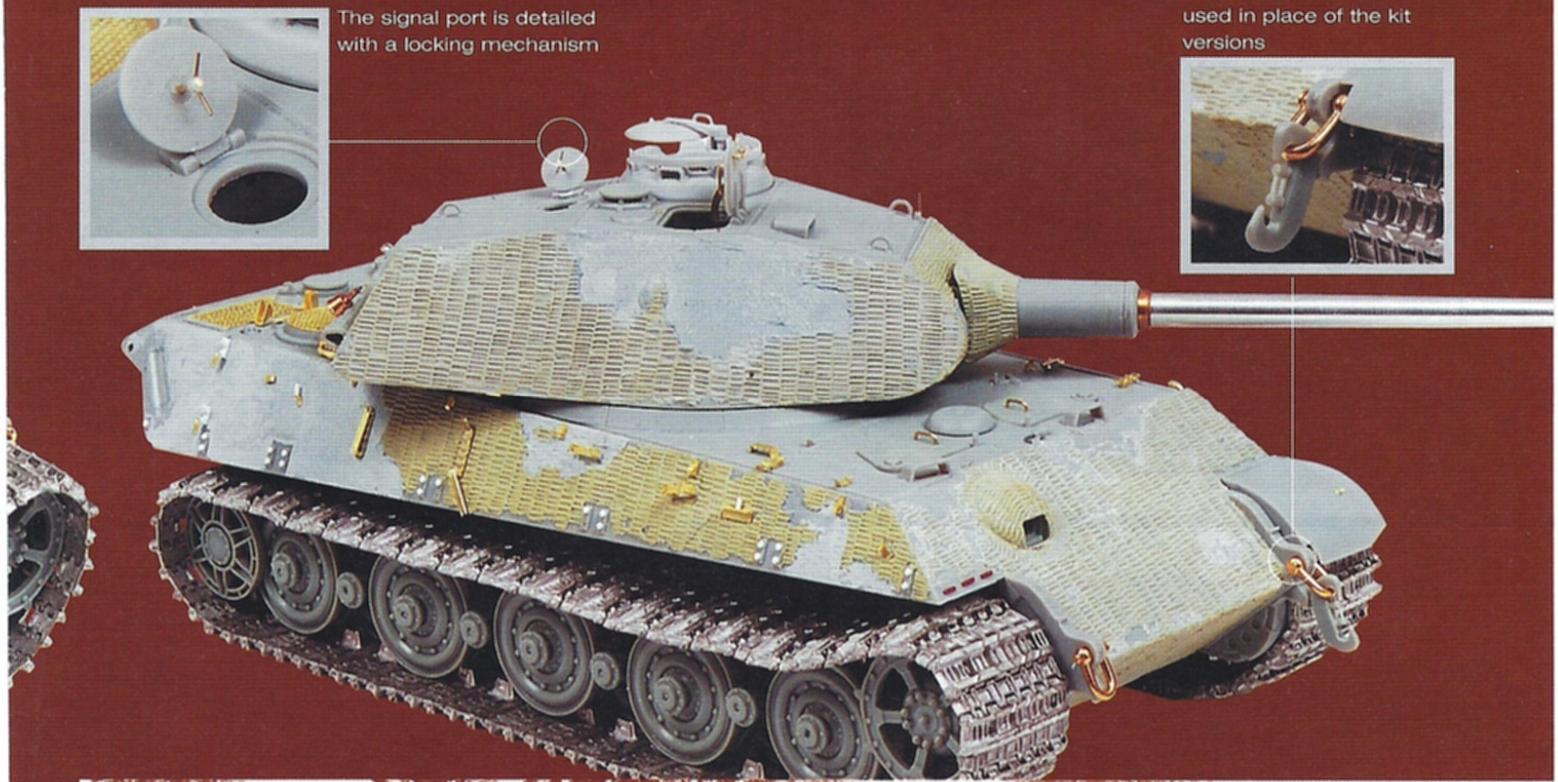
With an open hatch MORI comes to the rescue by providing all the internal details on their replacement cupola.

The Pistol port on the turret hatch was drilled out and an ABER plug from their Ferdinand set was fitted.

The welded shell port would normally be hidden by the zimmerit. GREEN STUFF putty was applied around a circle of plastic as a guide.The rivets are from MODEL KASTEN

The muzzle brake is rotated slightly to replicate the photographs

FRIULMODEL tracks replace the kit parts - these are the old style crimp together type

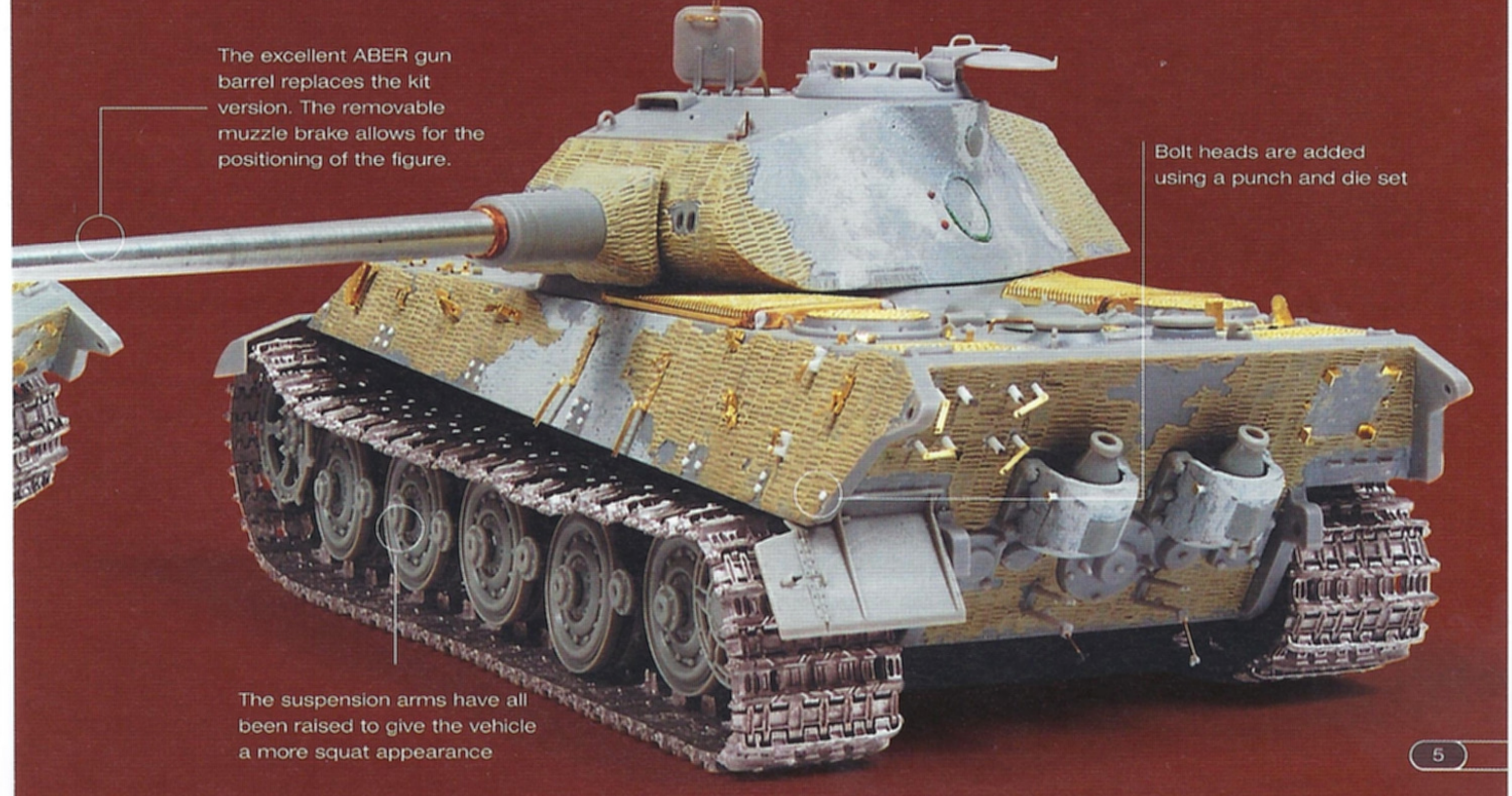


The signal port is detailed with a locking mechanism

ABER tow shackles are used in place of the kit versions

Photo Bovington Tank Museum

Photo Bovington Tank Museum

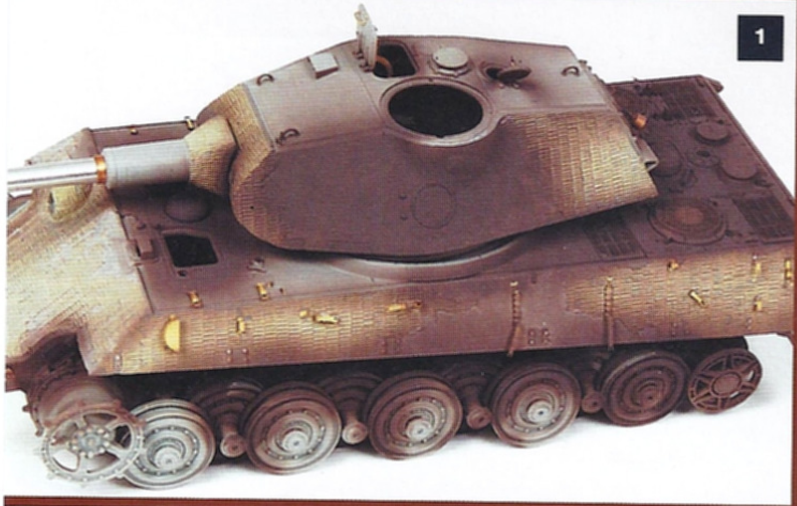


The excellent ABER gun barrel replaces the kit version. The removable muzzle brake allows for the positioning of the figure.

Bolt heads are added using a punch and die set

The suspension arms have all been raised to give the vehicle a more squat appearance

69 Ton Signpost Painting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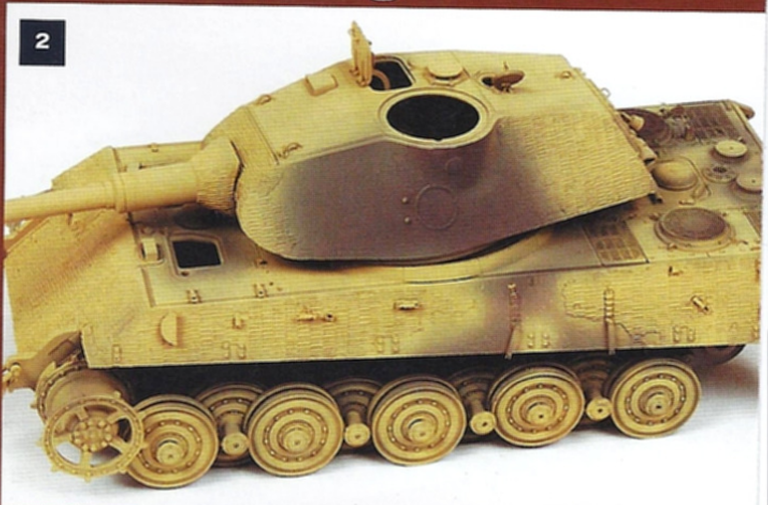
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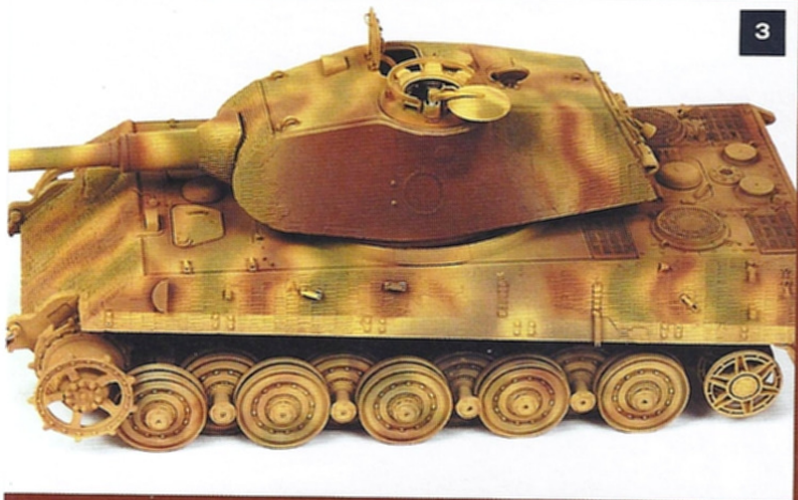
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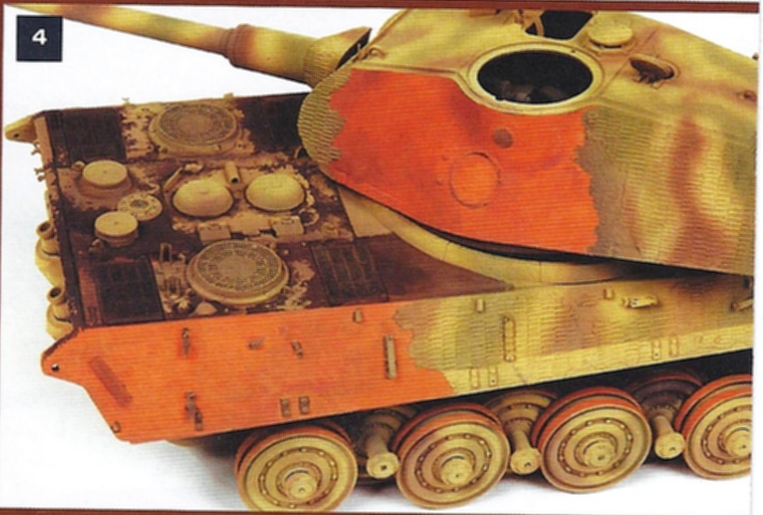
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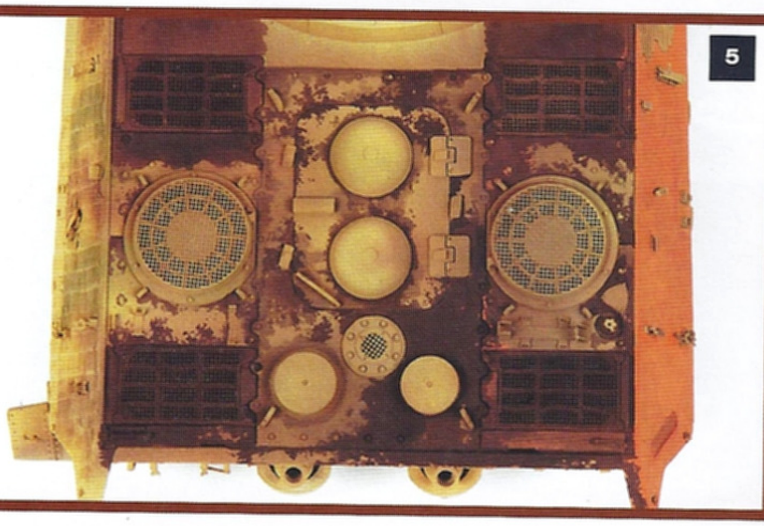
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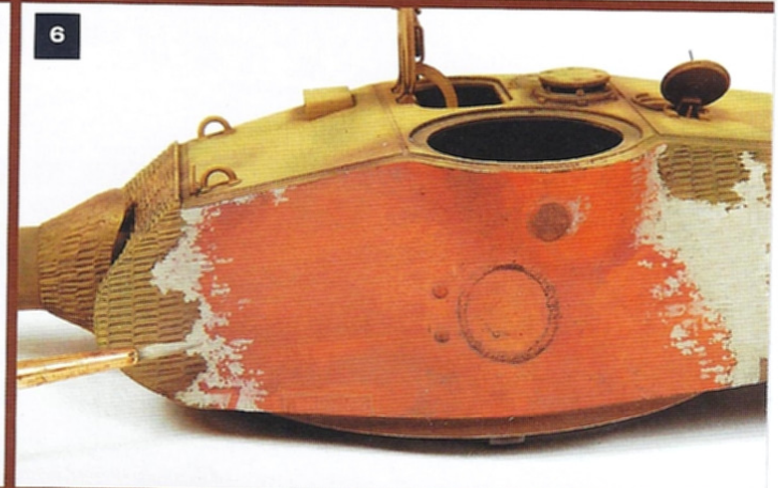
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Photos 1 to 3
The initial painting sequence with a dark brown coat applied before the base coat of sand and finally the camouflage pattern along with some rusty tones on the turret and engine deck.

Photos 4 to 5
Areas of rusted bare metal are picked out in mottled tones of enamels and the engine deck gets a base coat of dark brown.

Photo 6
The remnants of the zimmerit paste are picked out on the turret using a fine brush.

Photos 7 to 8
I cut down a small chisel brush to the width of the zimmerit pattern and stippled on different toned ribbed patterns to the areas where the zimmerit had been lost. Areas of red oxide primer were also applied to areas of more conventional damage.

Photos 9 to 10
These close ups show the application of rust stains and chipped paint around the hatches. Note that a wash has been applied to the whole vehicle using a mix of oils and enamels.

Photo 11
An overall view of the tank with the chipped zimmerit looking very prominent.

Photo 12
The same ribbed effect was also applied to the areas of flaked zimmerit.

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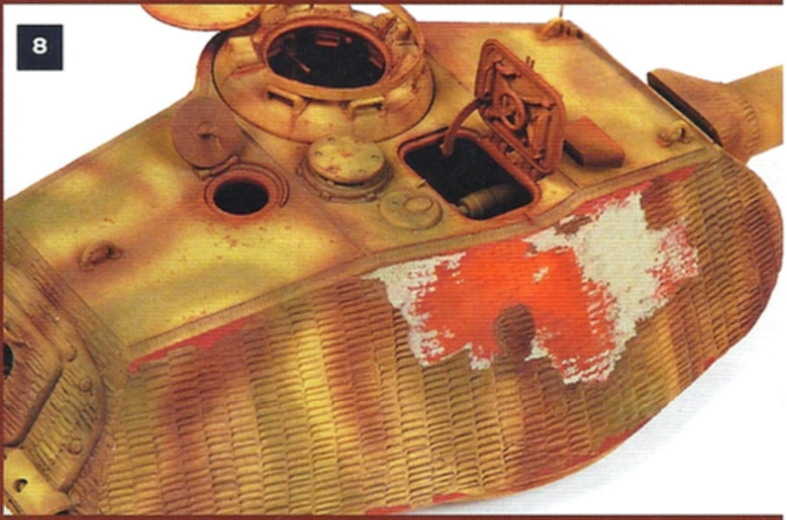

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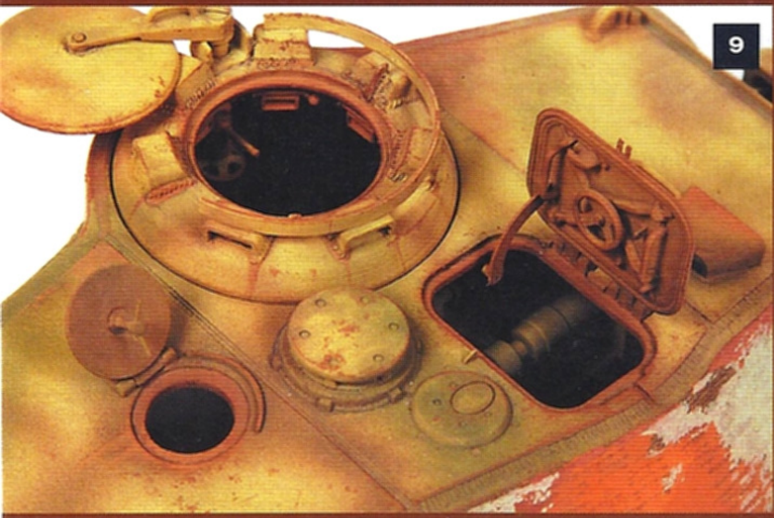

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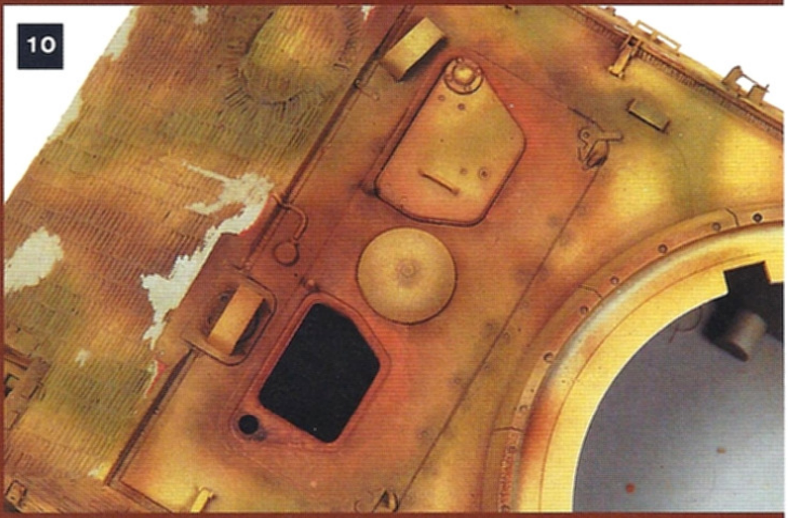

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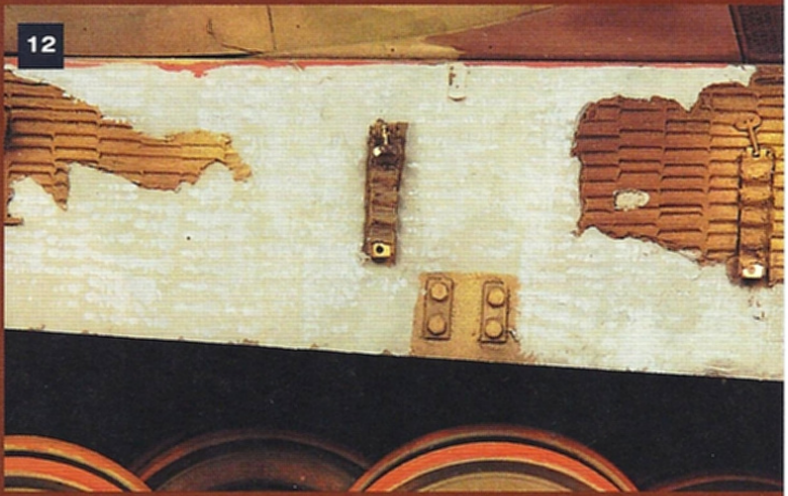

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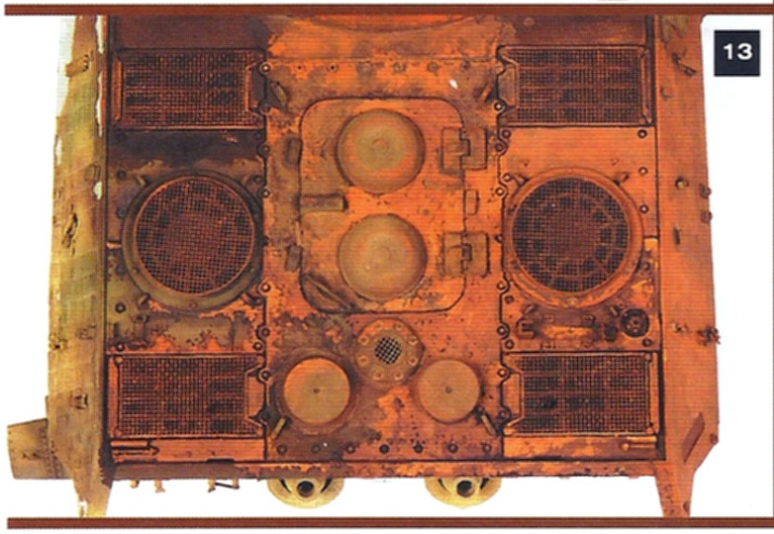

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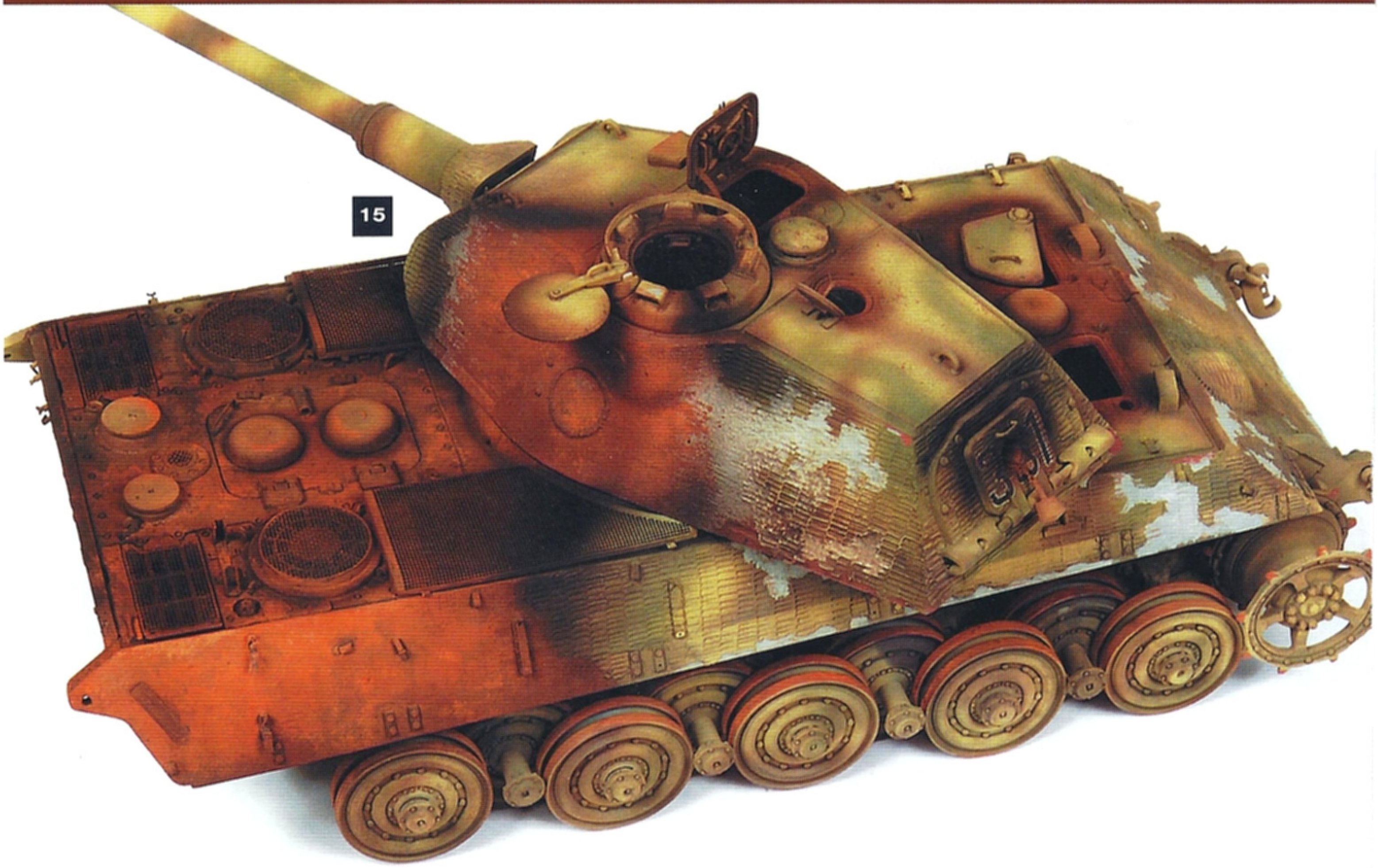

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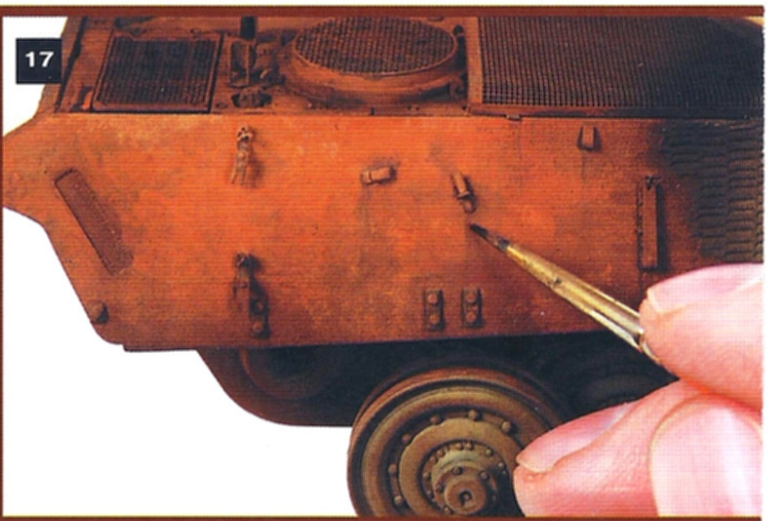

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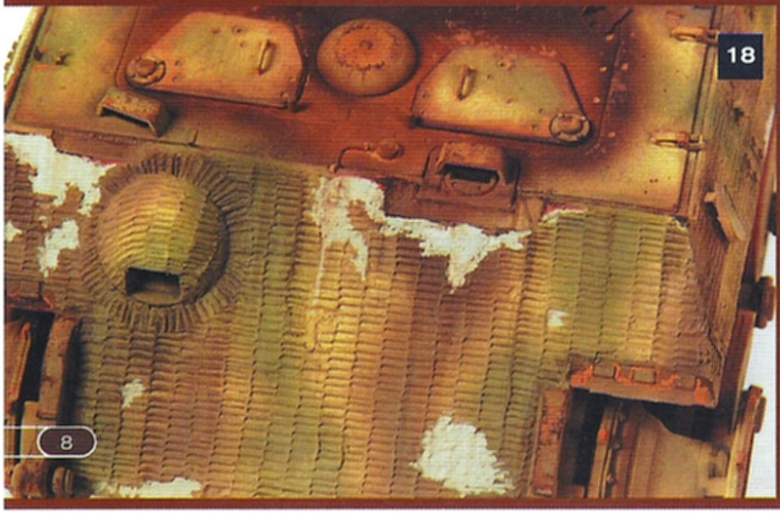

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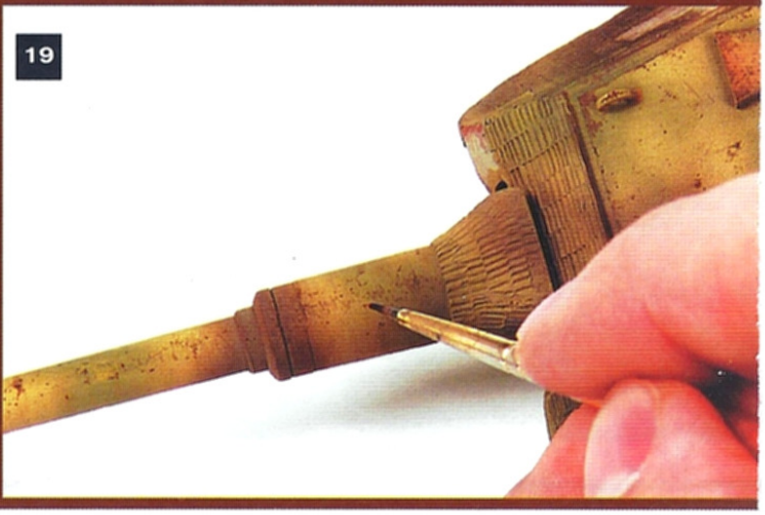

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Photo 13

The engine deck is given a top coat of assorted rust tones using enamels.

Photo 14

Although they are not visible on the period photos turret numbers were hand painted on the rear and right side of the turret

Photo 15

Areas of rust were oversprayed with tones of red brown gouache to unify the underlying enamels followed by areas of black soot staining around the burnt areas.

Photos 15 to 20

Scuffs and chips are applied to areas of high wear along with rain streaked stains on the vertical surfaces. At this point the heavily weathered appearance is really starting to work.

Photos 21 to 22

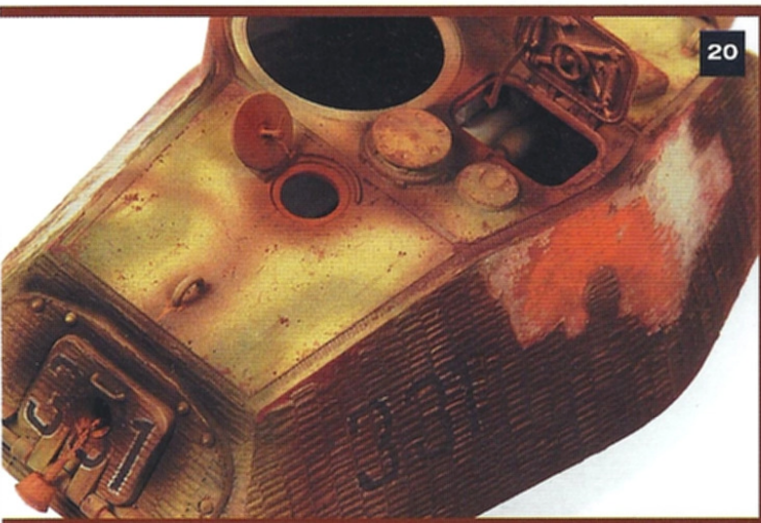
Weld beads are picked out in a Gunze Colour silver which can be polished when dry.

Photos 23 to 25

The tracks are sprayed with enamels in a chocolate brown colour before getting a wash of rust toned enamels. Next earth toned pigments are brushed into all the recesses followed by some diluted rust pigments. After fitting the tracks they are given a light wash on the raised surfaces with more enamels.

Photo 27

Because the tank has been at the roadside for some time I added areas of dust to the horizontal surfaces. This shot of the engine deck shows it around the turret ring and air intakes.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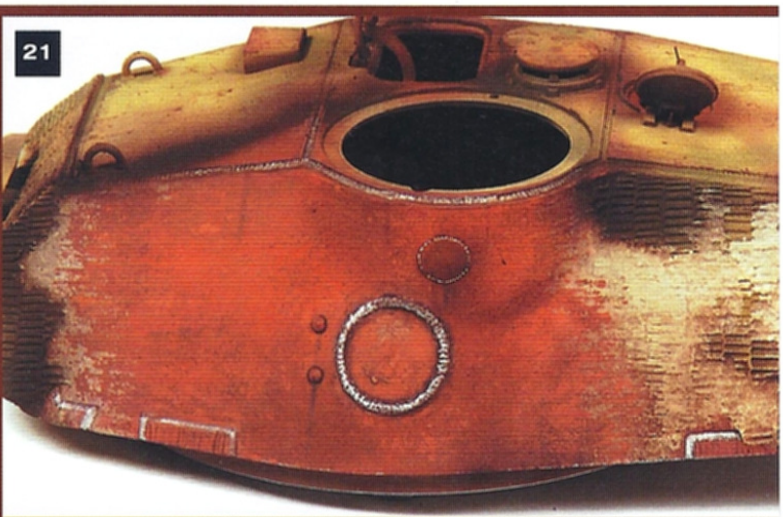
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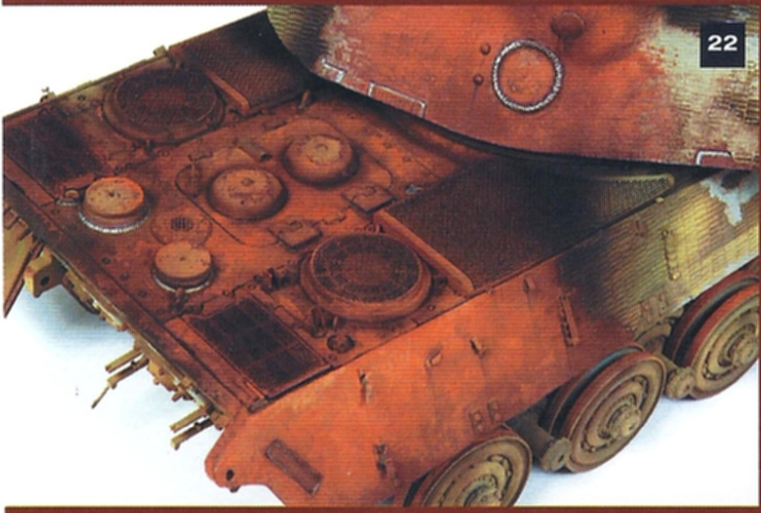
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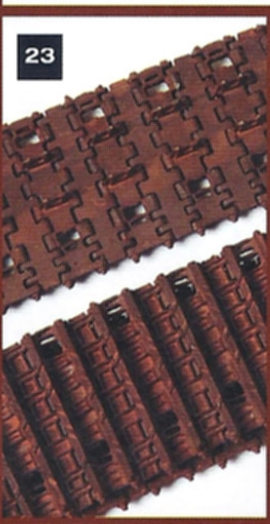
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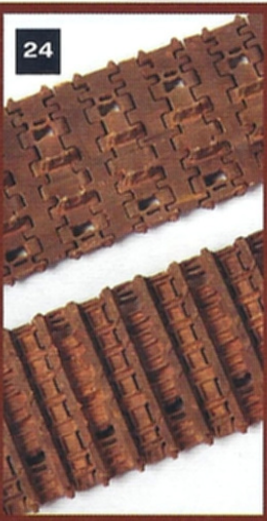
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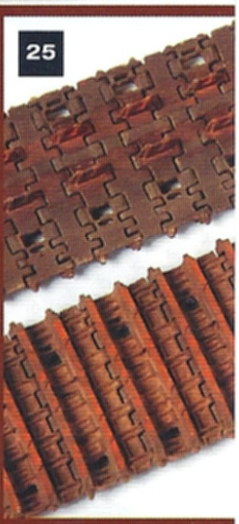
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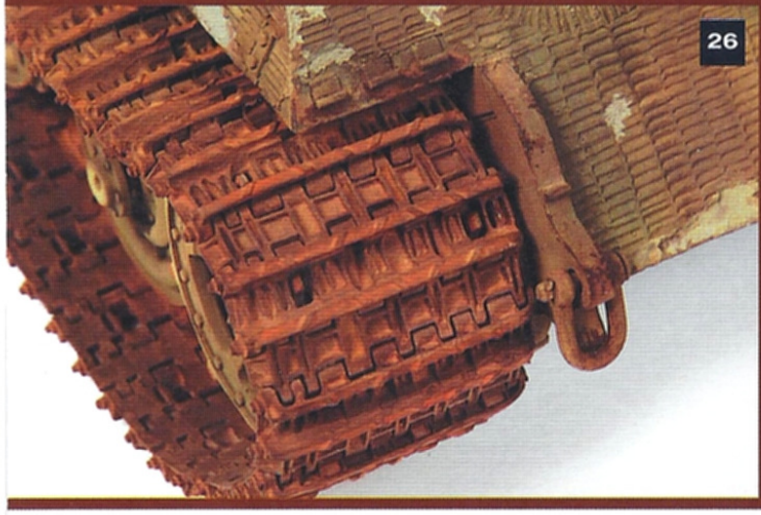
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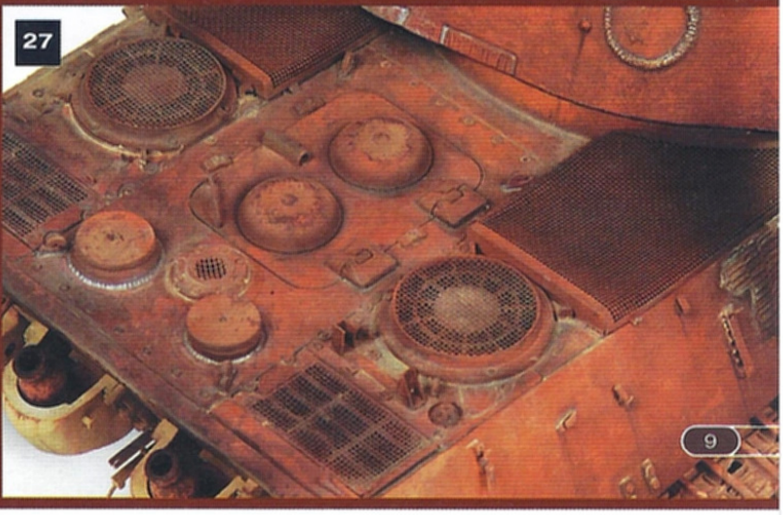
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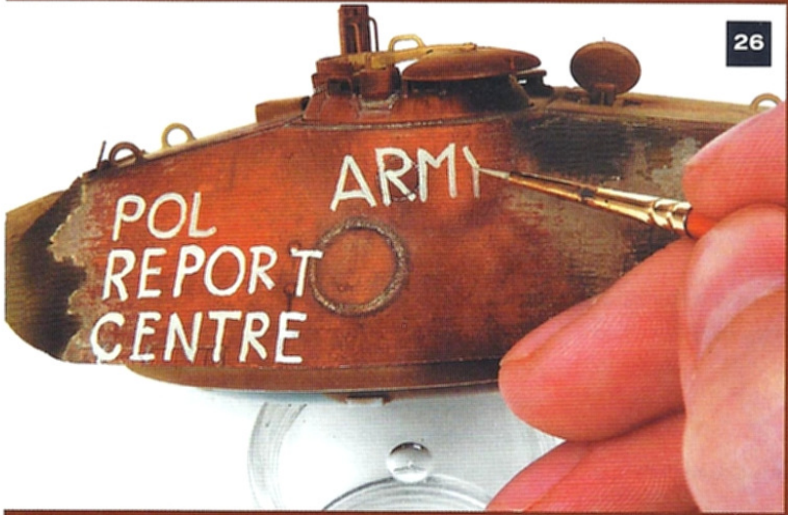
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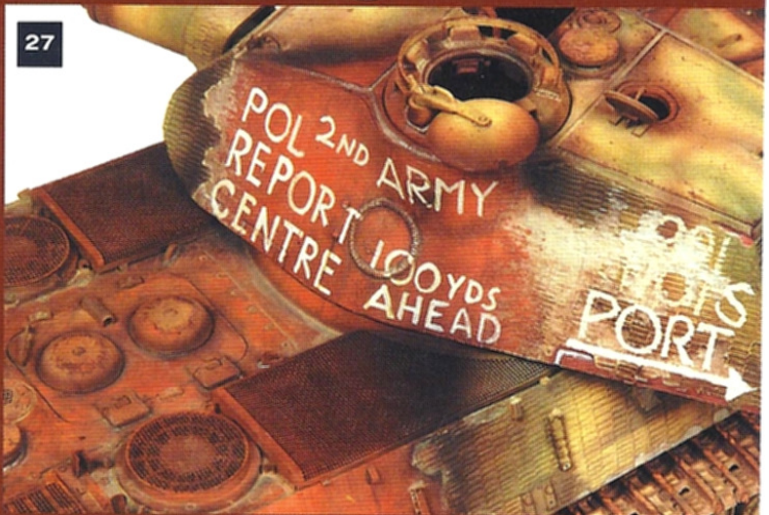
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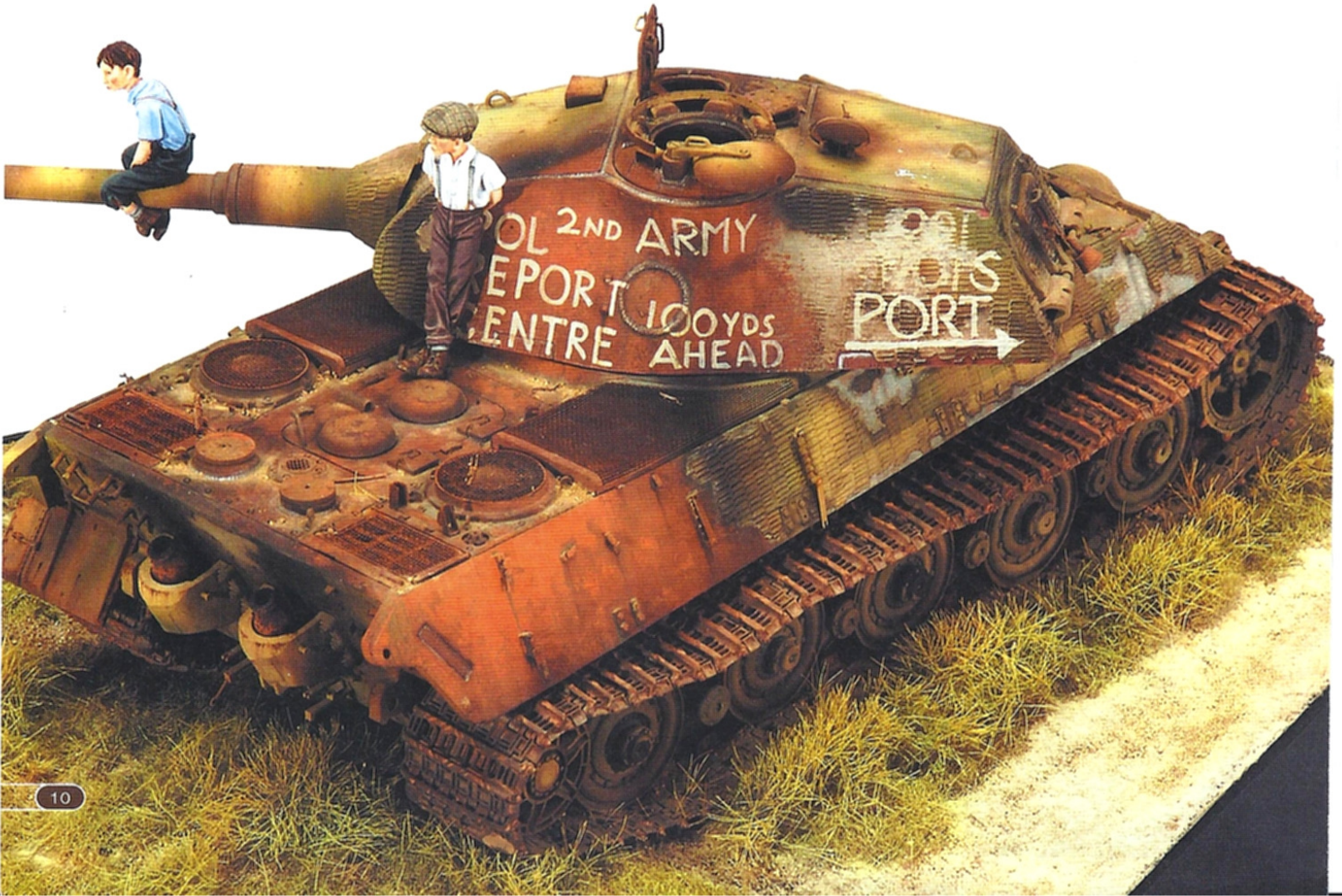
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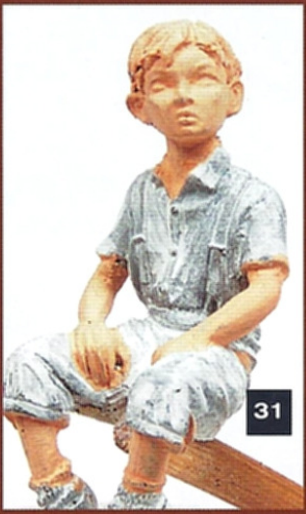

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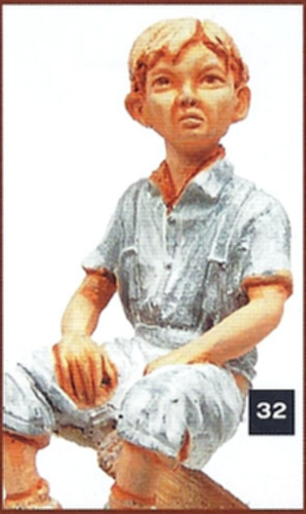

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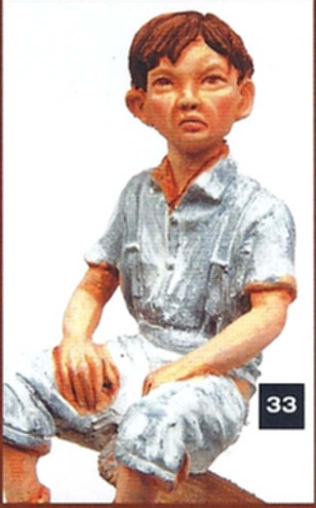

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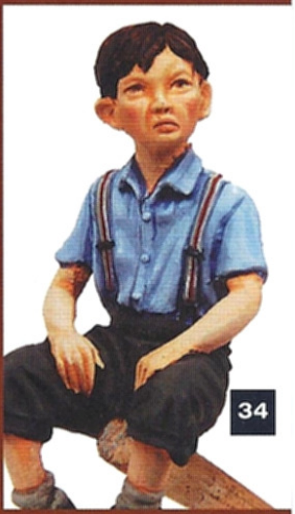

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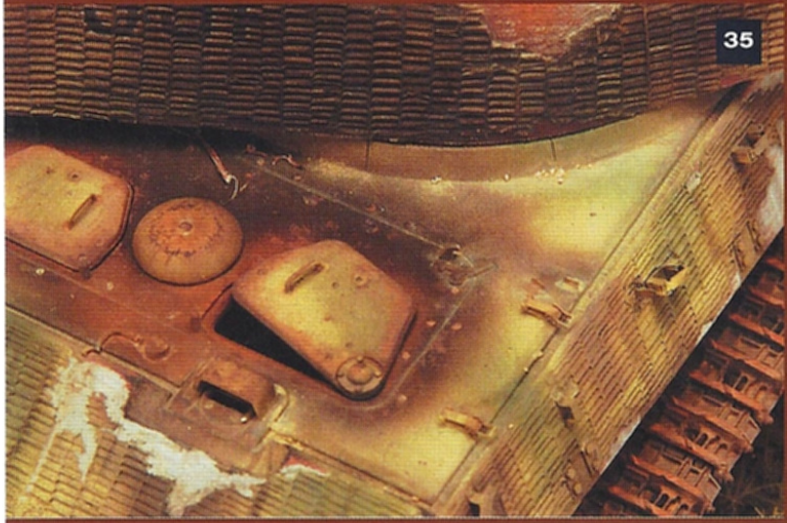

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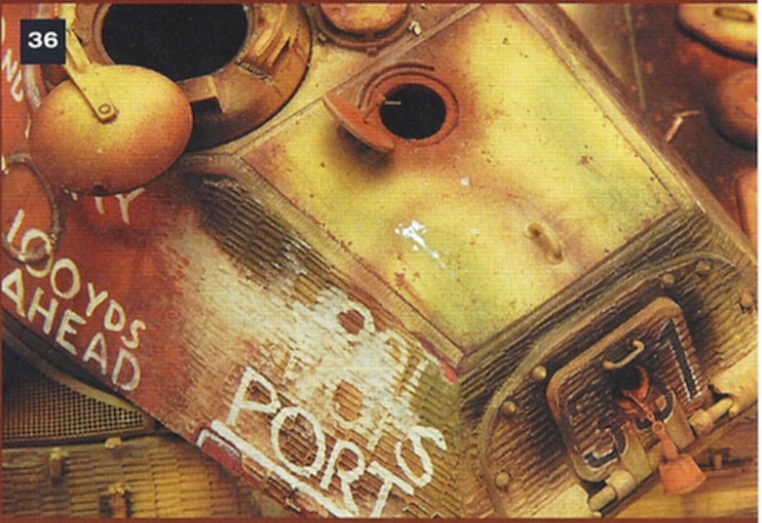

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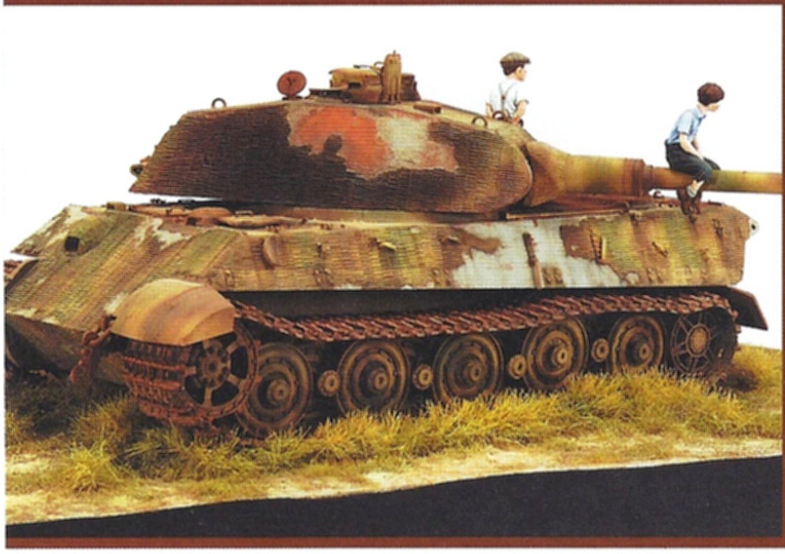


Photos 26 to 27

With close reference to the photographs the lettering was applied to the turret using white enamels which was dirtied with Humbrol No.72.

Photo 28

More debris was applied to the decks with small stones and sticks scattered around to add to the feeling that the vehicle has been sitting at the roadside for some time.

Photo 29

Similarly the tracks are sunken into the base and accumulated debris is added to the inside of the tracks and strands of grass are growing up through the tracks.

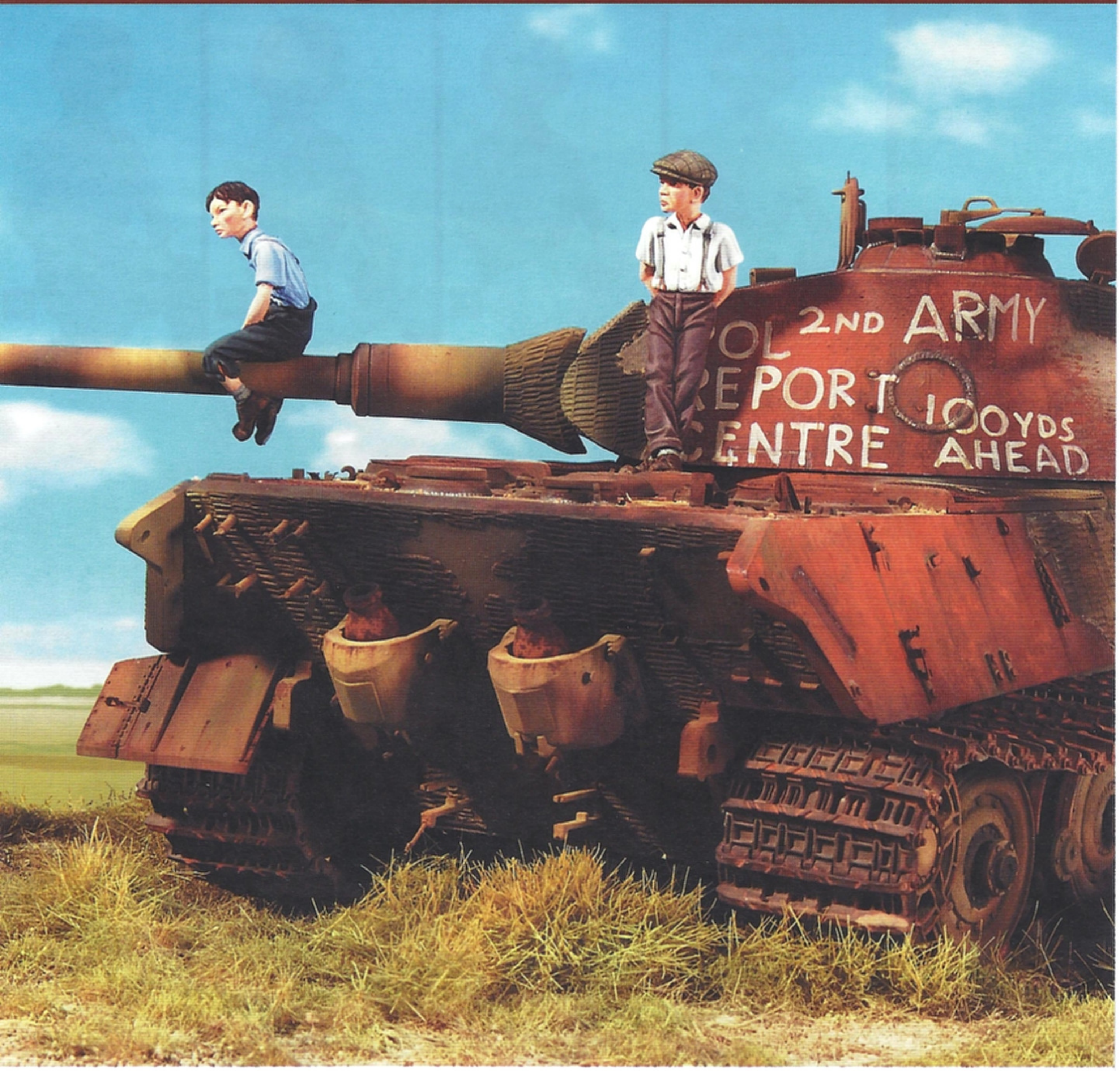
Photos 30 to 34

The Andrea 'Rascals' figures were ideal and required only minor adjustments. I chose to remove the seated boy's hat an sculpted a new top to his head using Magicsculpt. These were the first children's faces I had painted and it required a slightly different approach - no 5 O'clock shadows but pink cheeks instead.

Photos 35 to 36

Details of the debris on the upper deck and turret, notice the bird droppings on the turret roof.

Finishing touches



A simple base was made using polystyrene ceiling tiles into which the drainage ditch was cut to replicate the groundwork in the photographs. Whilst the layer of filler was still wet the tank was positioned on the base projected by a layer of cling film. This allowed me to sit the tank into the filler for that realistic sunken appearance. The 'footprint' of the tank tracks were then cleaned out of any remaining filler before it set.

Once dry, the tank was repositioned and the grass matting was torn into irregular sections and glued into place around the vehicle, checking all the time that the positioning looked natural. I kept the longer grass close to the hull as people walking around the vehicle would tend to wear down the foliage. When the grass has dried the tank was again removed and the base was sprayed using gouache. The vehicle was then glued into position and the grass was adjusted for a final fit around the running gear and the figures were glued into position. The final touch was the fitting of the muzzle brake which I had to leave separate in order to slide the boy down the barrel. This was fitted at a slight angle as seen in the photographs.

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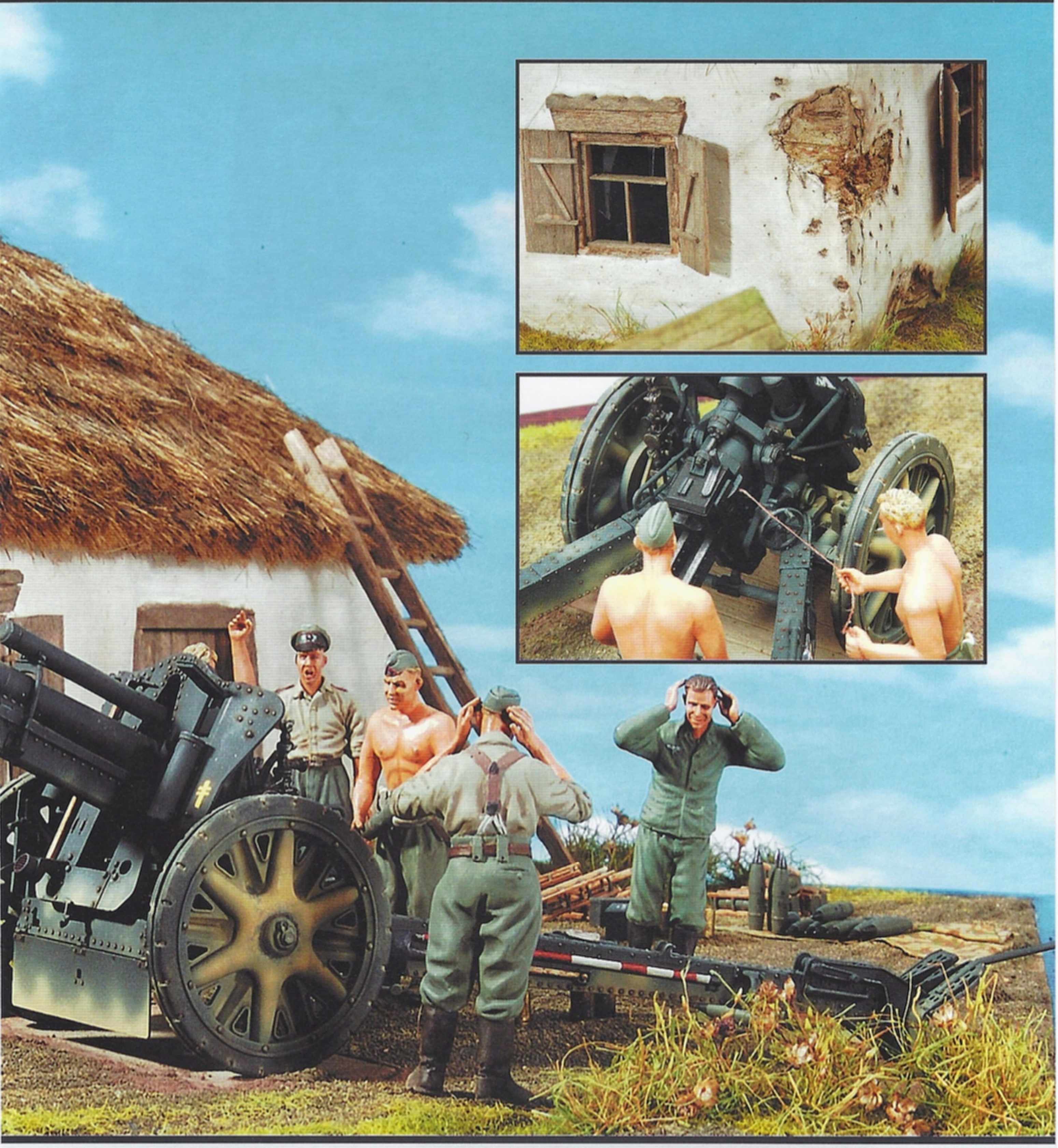
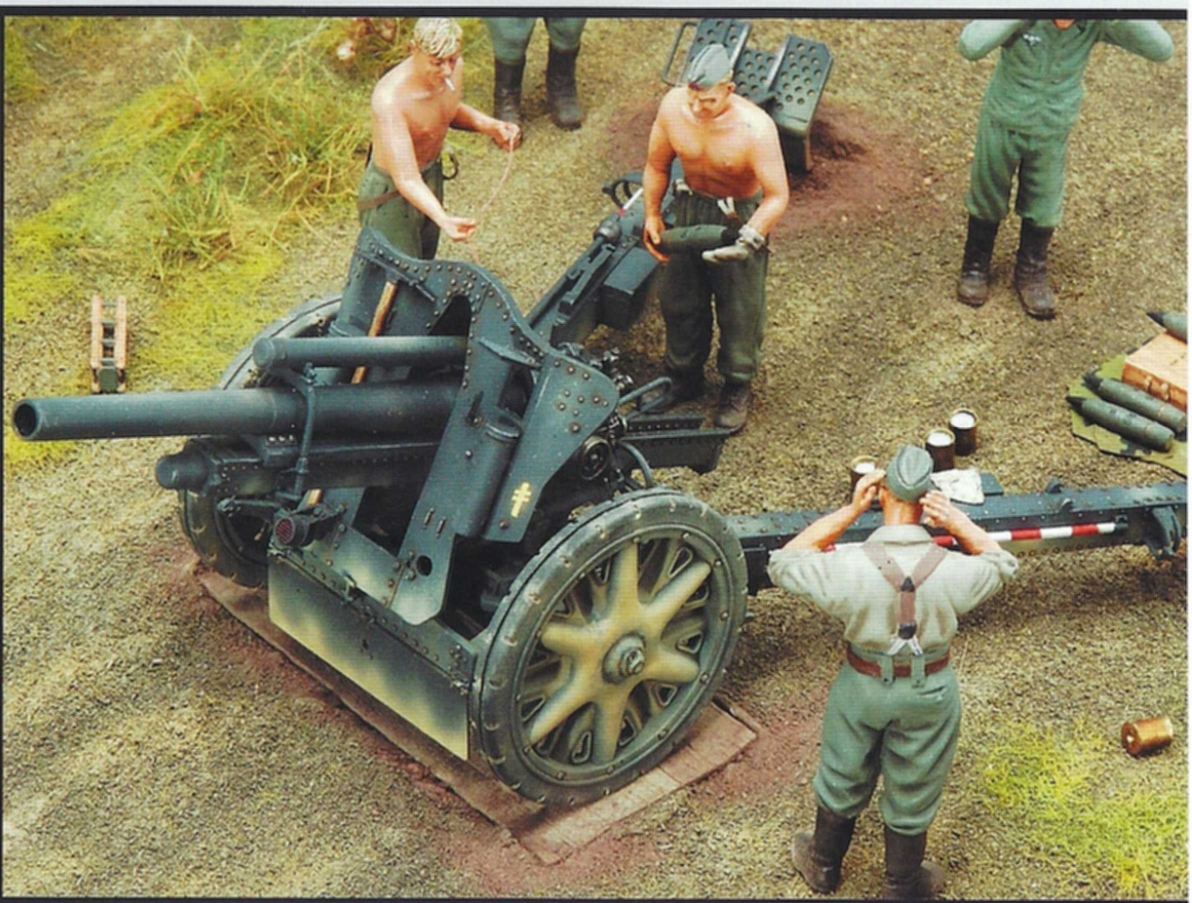
Distant Target

Modelled & described by Graeme Newman

AFV Club's leFH 18 Howitzer



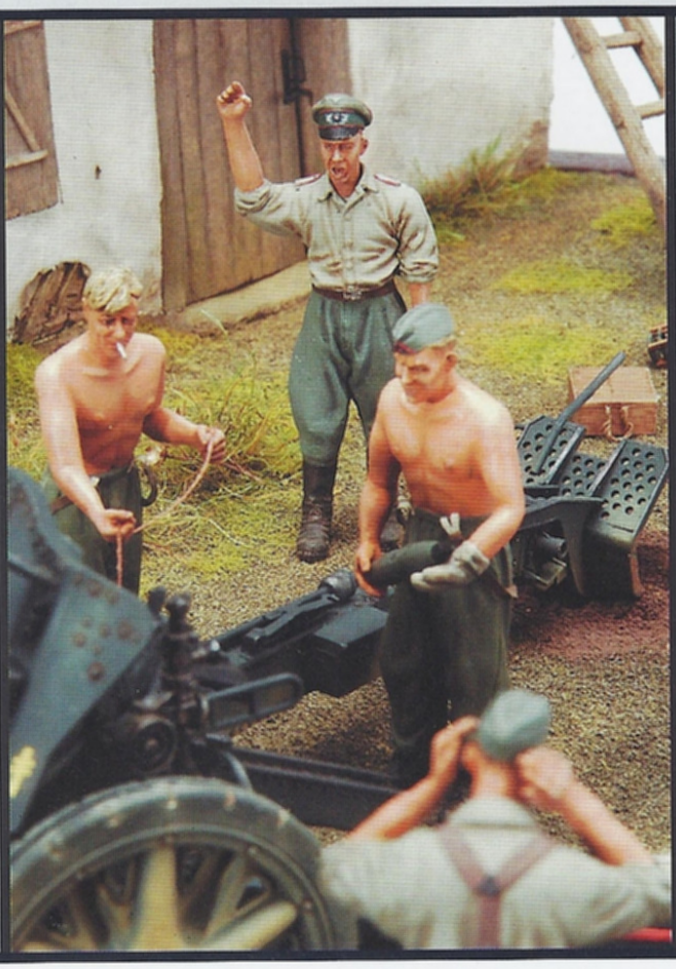
'Feuer' Distant Target

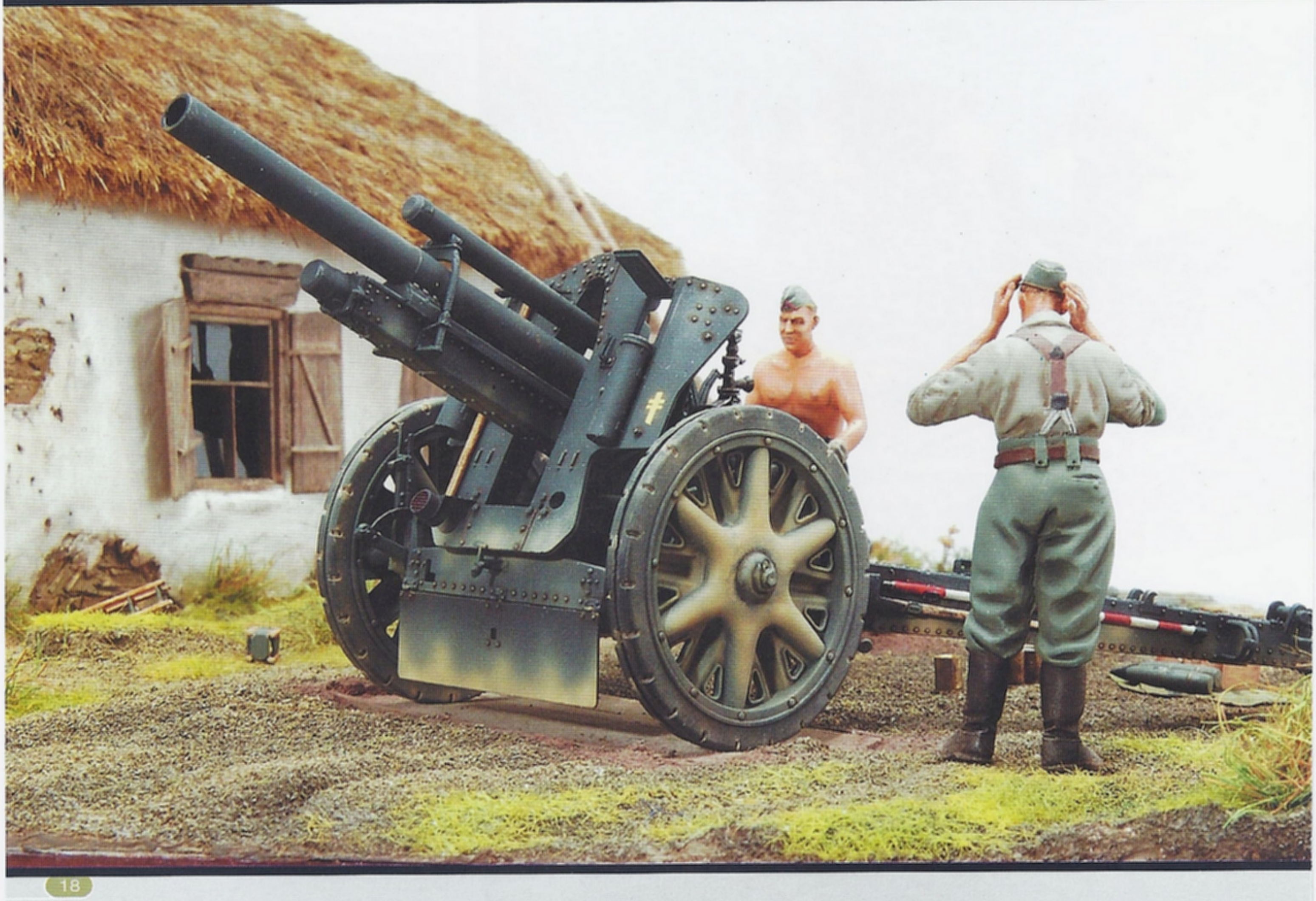


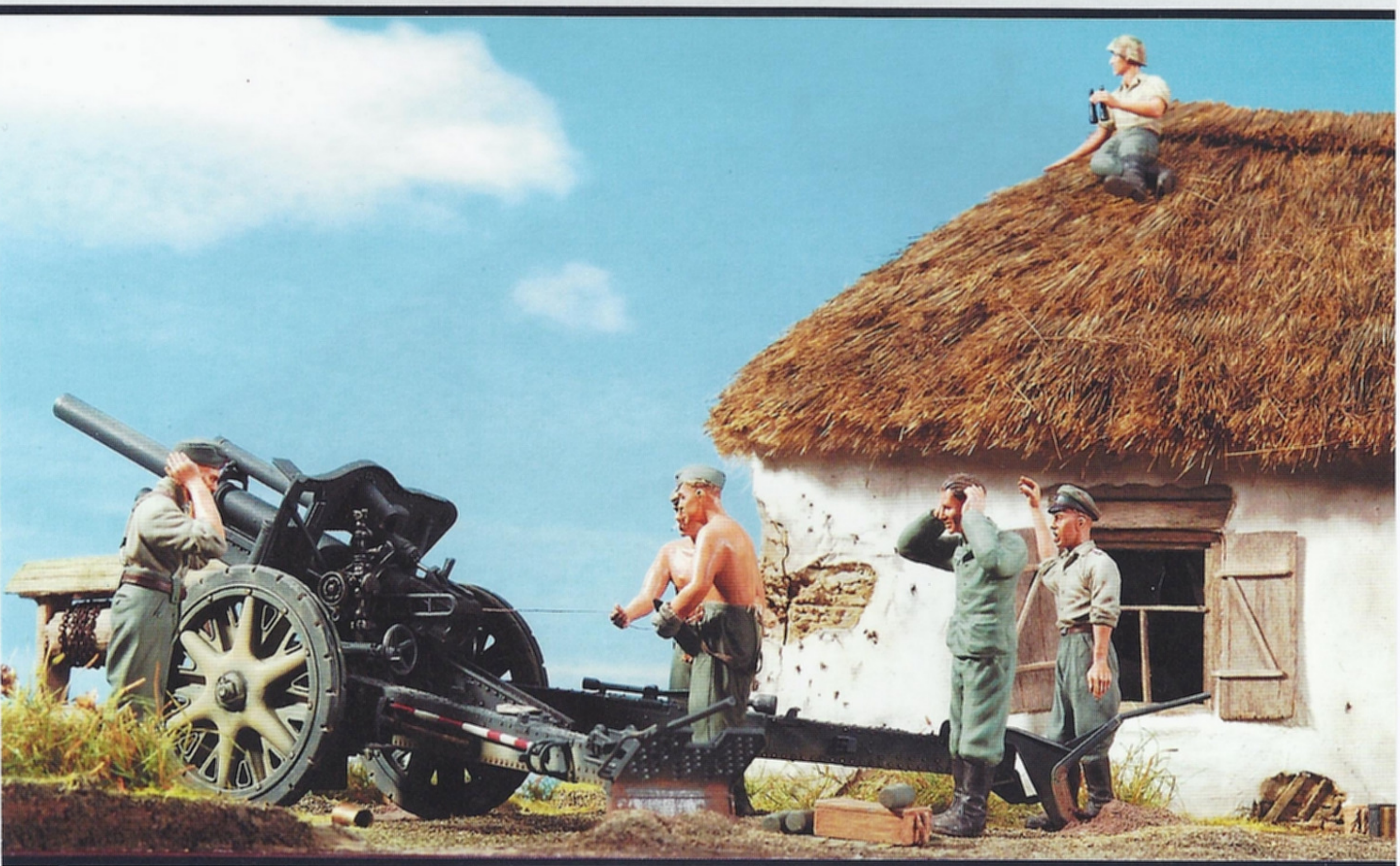
The release of AFV Club's 10.5cm field howitzer and ammunition caught my imagination (the pressed steel wheels did it for me!) and fills a big void in artillery of the period. The kit can be built straight from the box and builds into a little gem. Care must be taken to follow the instructions as it is not as obvious where many of the parts belong, as is the case when building an armour model and some of the parts are very fragile.

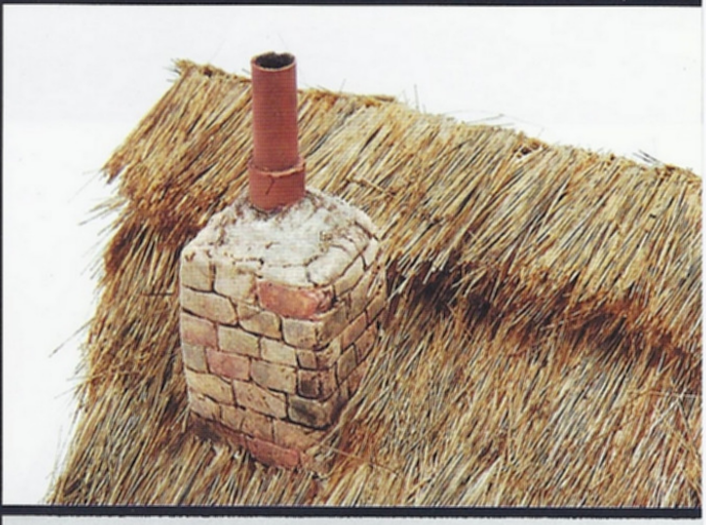
The ubiquitous 10.5 cm field howitzer was seen on all fronts during the war. I wanted to depict the gun in action in the summer of 1942 during the push towards Stalingrad and chose 3rd (mot) Artillery regiment of the 3rd motorised infantry division. These units were reinforced infantry divisions, which as the name suggests had at least partial motorisation. They also had an organic Panzer battalion and most that were involved in Operation Blue were equipped with many of the potent new Panzer IV F2s. One of the features of this campaign was the searing heat at times reaching in excess of 40C and the shortage of water. Most of the wells in the region had been poisoned by the retreating Soviets who sacrificed territory rather than let the Germans encircle large numbers of troops.

The most challenging part of the diorama was to create a crew, as there were no commercially available figures that met my criteria. Most photos of artillery crew in summer show them in fatigues or partially dressed, this is obviously due to the labour intensive nature of the firing regime-especially in high temperatures. I started by casting torsos and boots from my rather large collection of stock figures, standard two part polyurethane casting resin was used along with a very elastic rubber to create the moulds. This type of rubber allows you extricate a figure



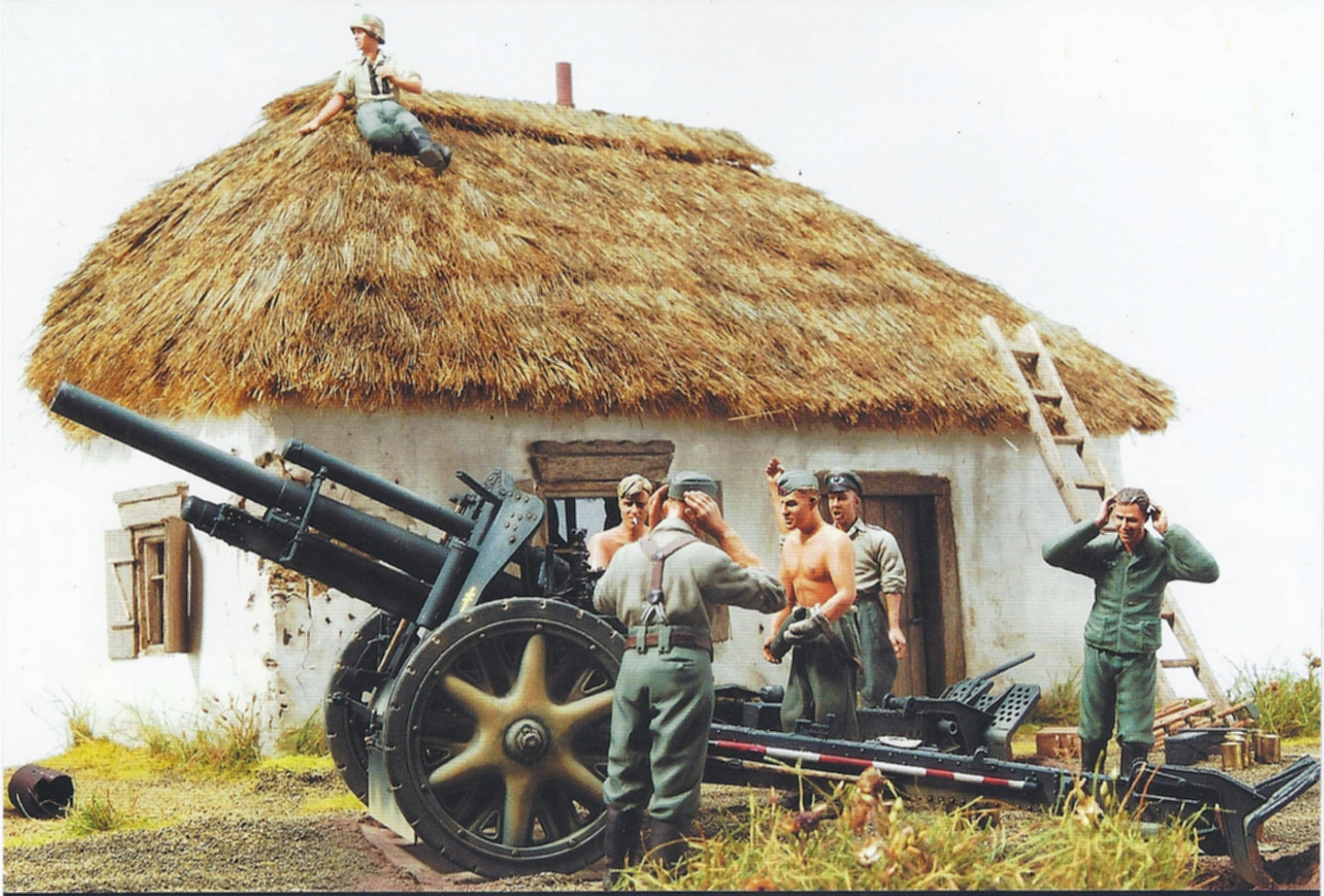






by simply stretching the mould to release the item without tearing the mould. All heads and hands are Hornet items whilst the arms and legs are created using wire armatures and Duro two-part putty.

To create the typical Ukrainian farmhouse seen in this part of Southern Russia I used balsa for the walls that were simply covered in polyfilla crack filler to give an uneven texture. This allows various layers to be applied as well as being simple to scribe.



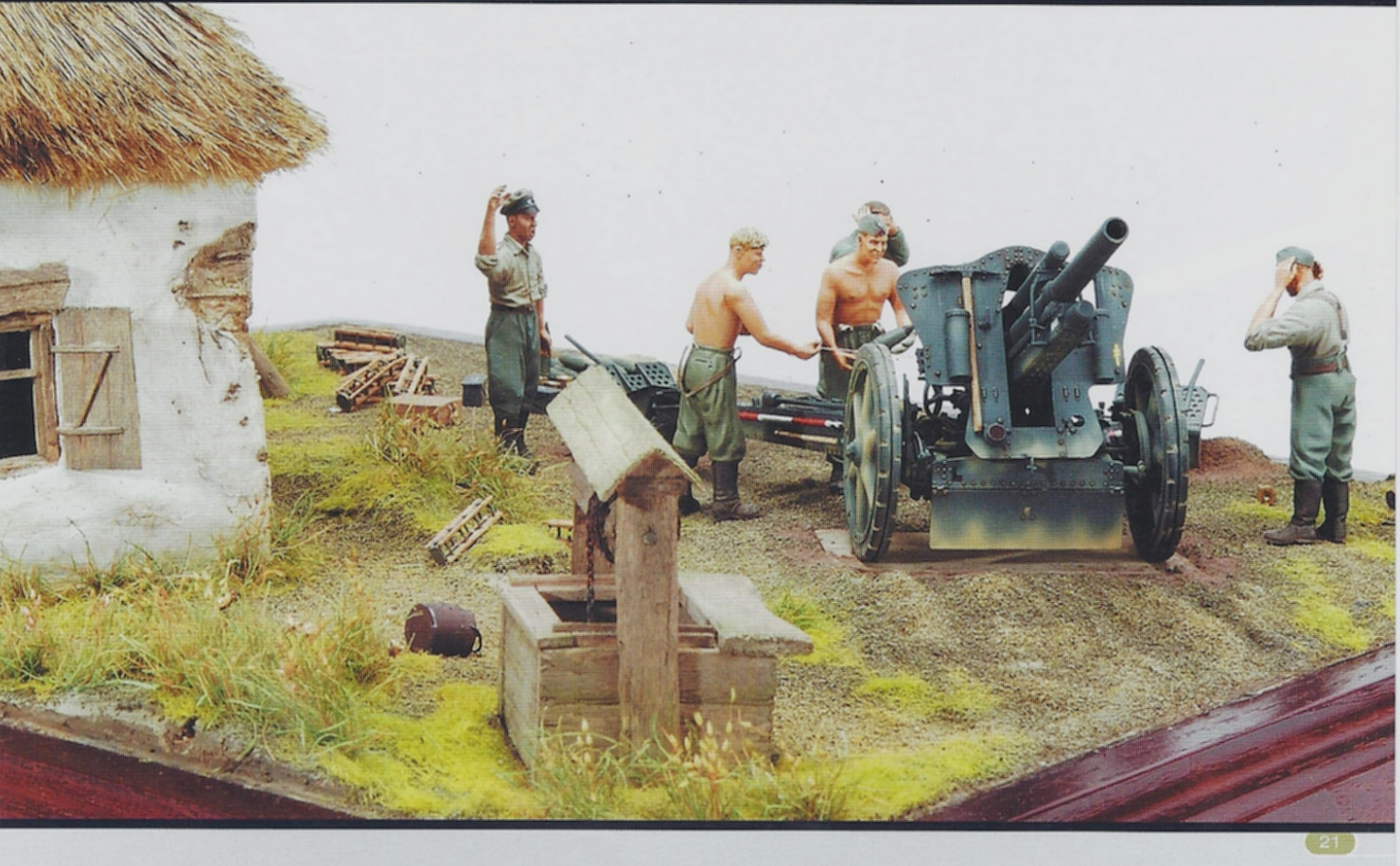
To cut through a building with the roof sloping away at various angles creating an interesting angle is tricky but not too difficult. A cardboard base was the foundation of the roof upon which was applied about four layers of decorators wallpaper brush hair (three brushes!). Natural coloured hair is best as this is easiest to paint. Other fixtures again are balsa stained with washes of enamels and oils; this works better than solid coats of paint and allows the natural materials to come to life.

Most of these dwellings were simple affairs due to the medieval practice of sharing the building with livestock in winter. Simply built of mud and straw brick the walls were rendered with a

solid coat, timber being reserved for essential fittings as wood is fairly scarce in large areas of the Ukraine.

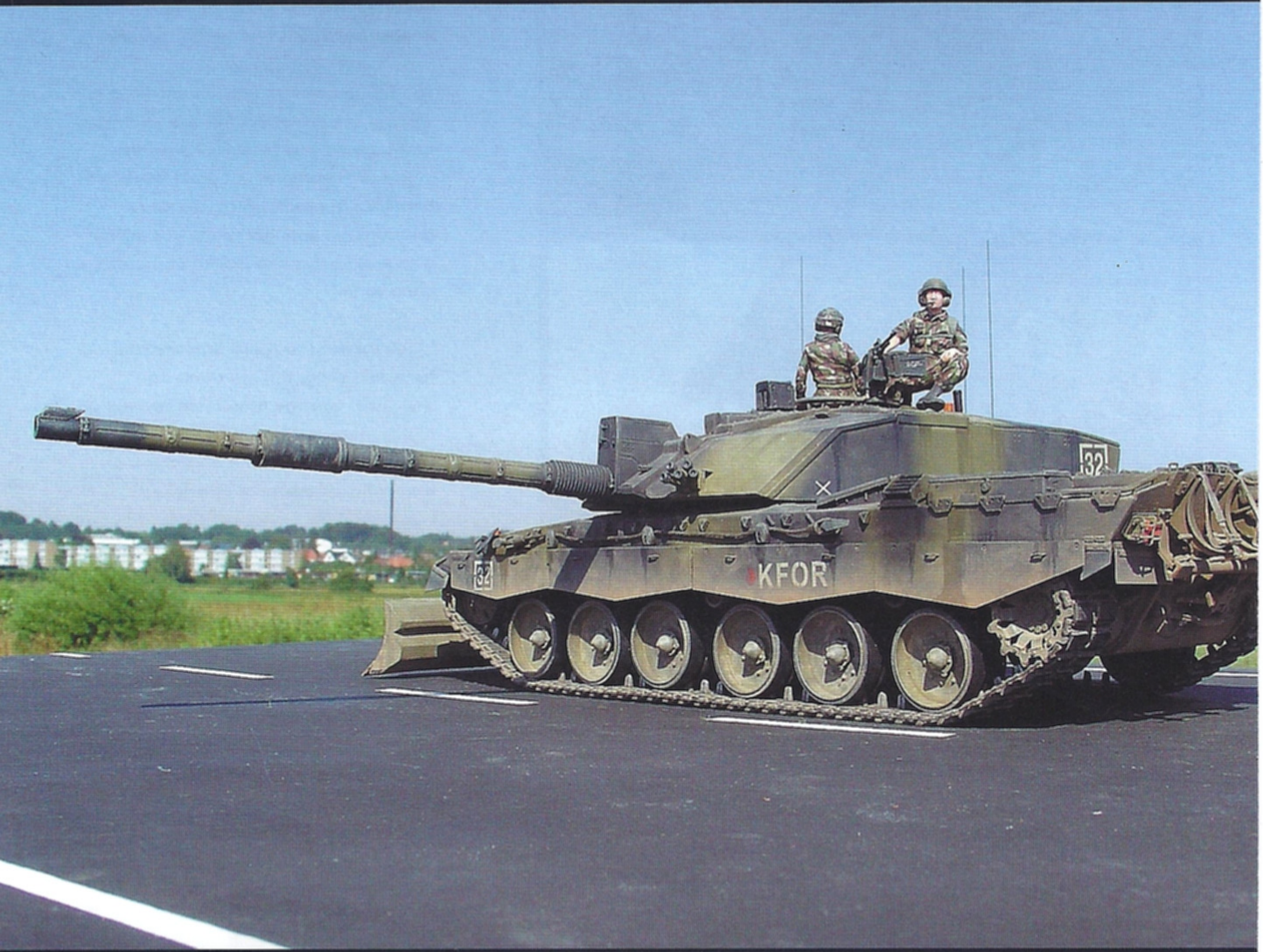
The groundwork is polyfilla covered in various grades of scatter then painted, static grass and sisal make up the grass with some small dried flowers to break up the uniformity. AFV Club ammunition sets complete the scene with a zeltbahn and Soviet camouflage cape (duro).

I look forward to more artillery kits from AFV Club, finding them an enjoyable change of subject as well as highly informative due to all the background research I undertook on the technical aspects of artillery.



VICKERS **CHALLENGER II** MBT

The Chinese Interpretation of the British Challenger, spiced up with Scottish Refinements

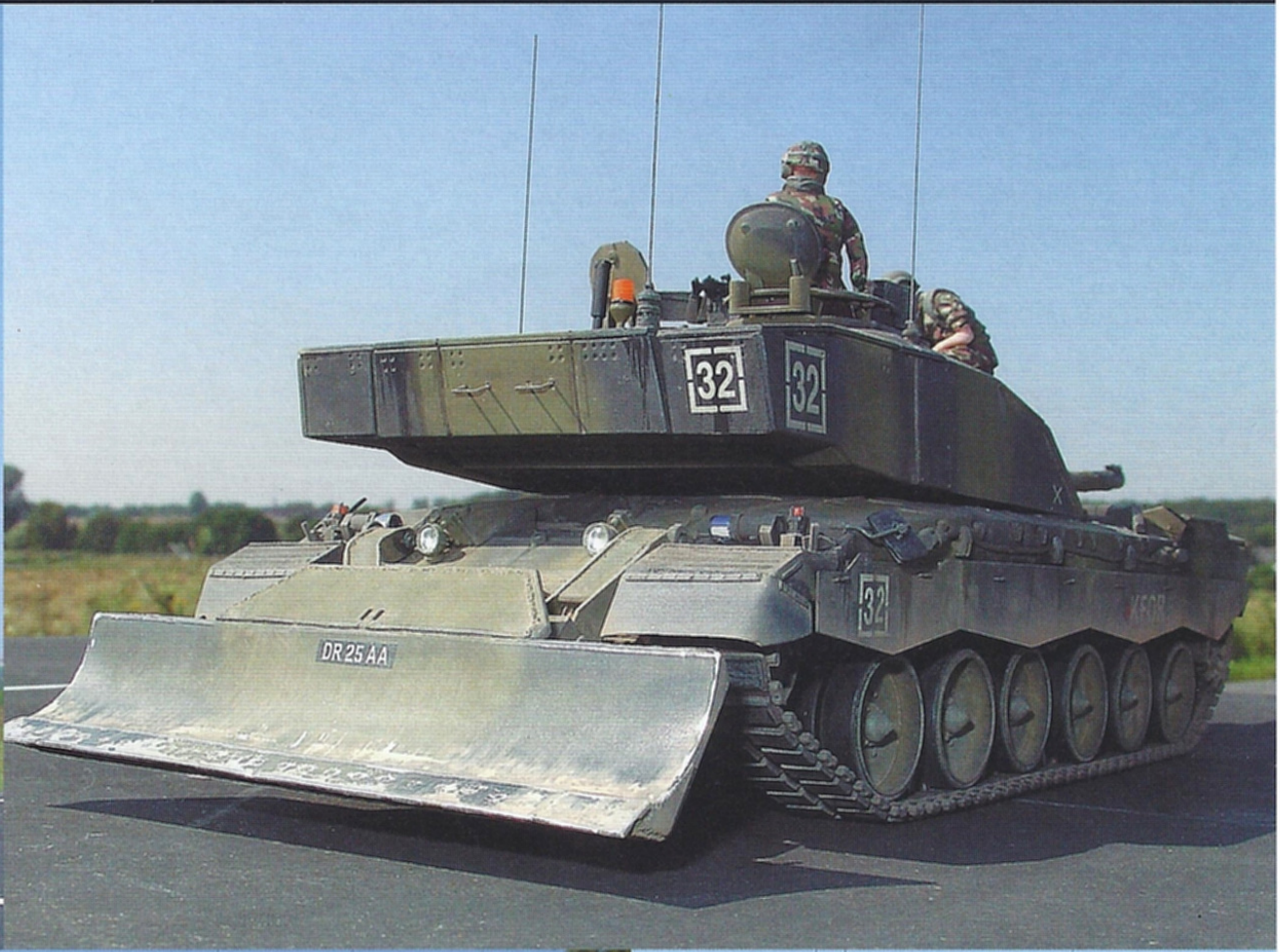


The British Challenger II Main Battle Tank is a very interesting vehicle to many modellers, being the UK's number one fighting machine it is prominent in the media due to its participation in various hot spots around the world.

The Challenger II is the first British tank since World War II to be designed and built by only one company-Vickers Defence Systems, whose plants in Barnbow, Leeds and Scotswood, Newcastle assemble the vehicles. It was developed from its predecessor, Challenger I with the famous Chobham armour, which received its baptism of fire in the first Gulf War. Even so, only 5% of the components are interchangeable with Challenger I. The most important changes are the climate controlled crew compartment (surely appreciated by the crews operating in desert conditions), an improved fire control system, upgrading to Dorchester Level II side and frontal armour and a complete redesign of the turret.

The Challenger II has a crew of 4 and weighs 62.5 tons. It is capable of a top speed of 56 km/h on road and has a range of 250-450 km; depending on the terrain it travels in.

by Albert Tureczek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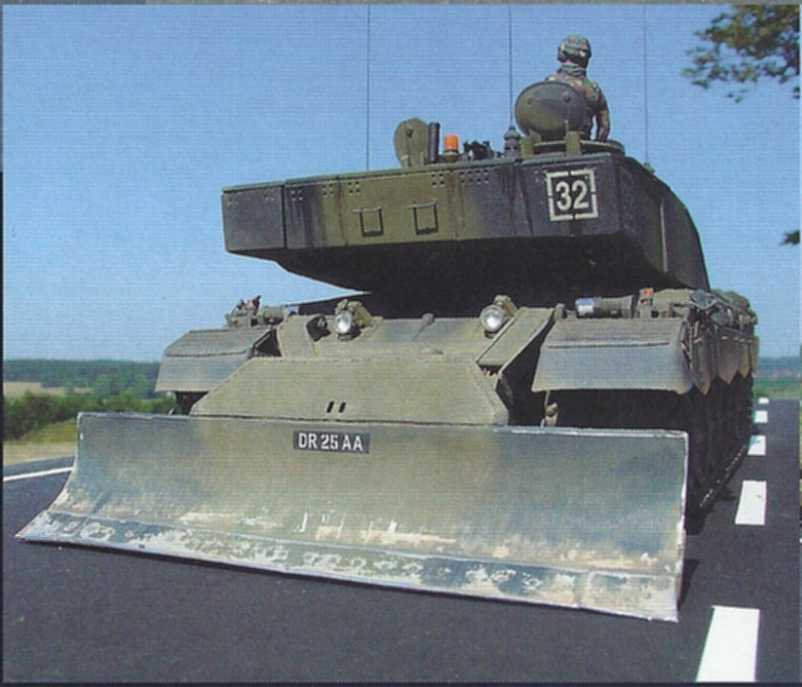

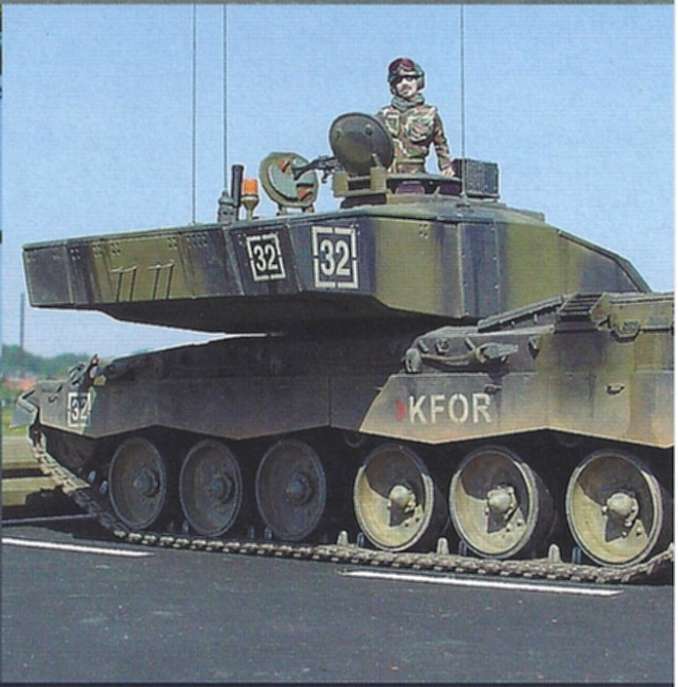
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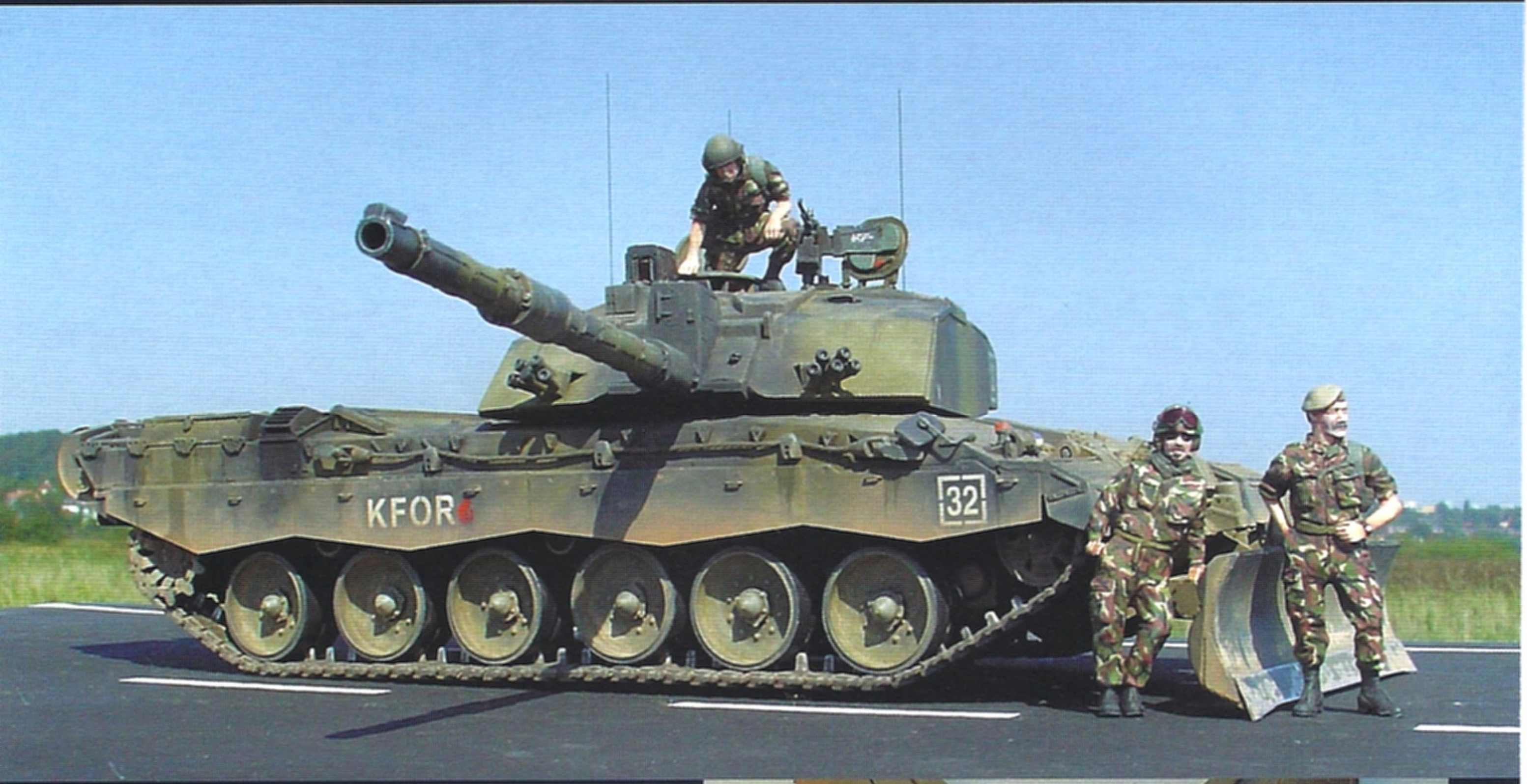
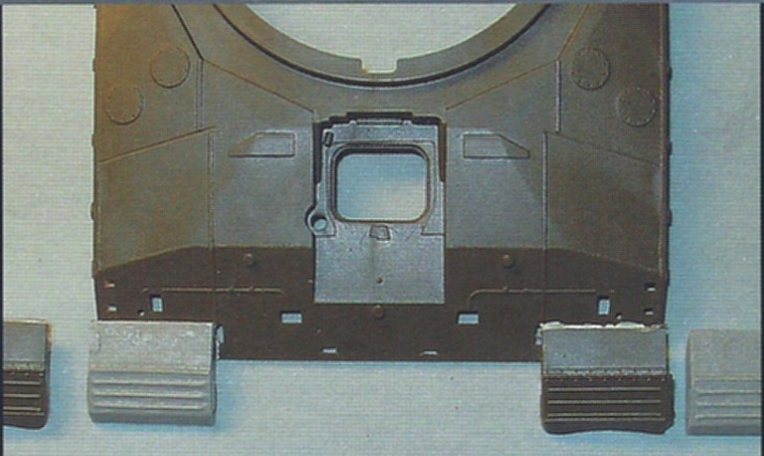
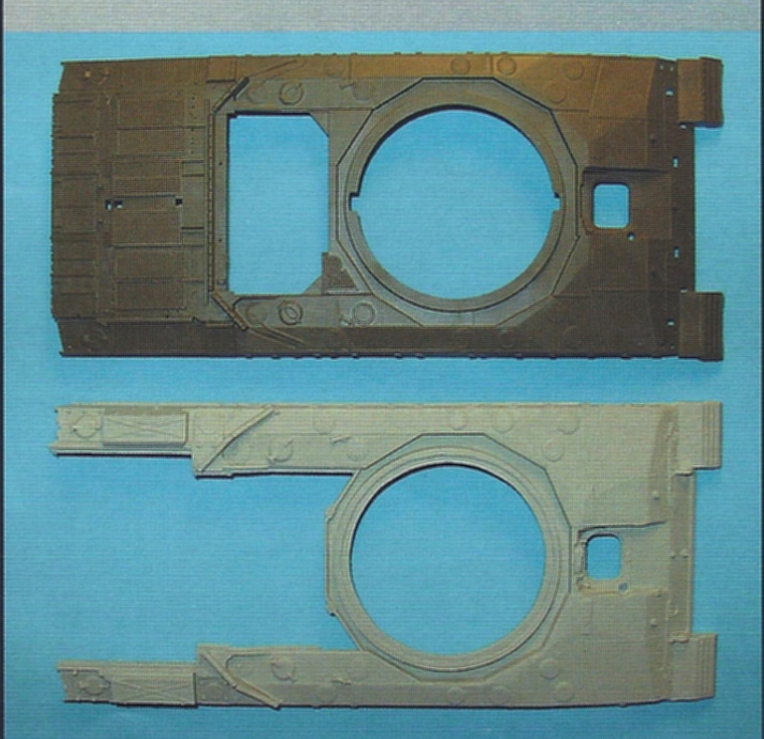




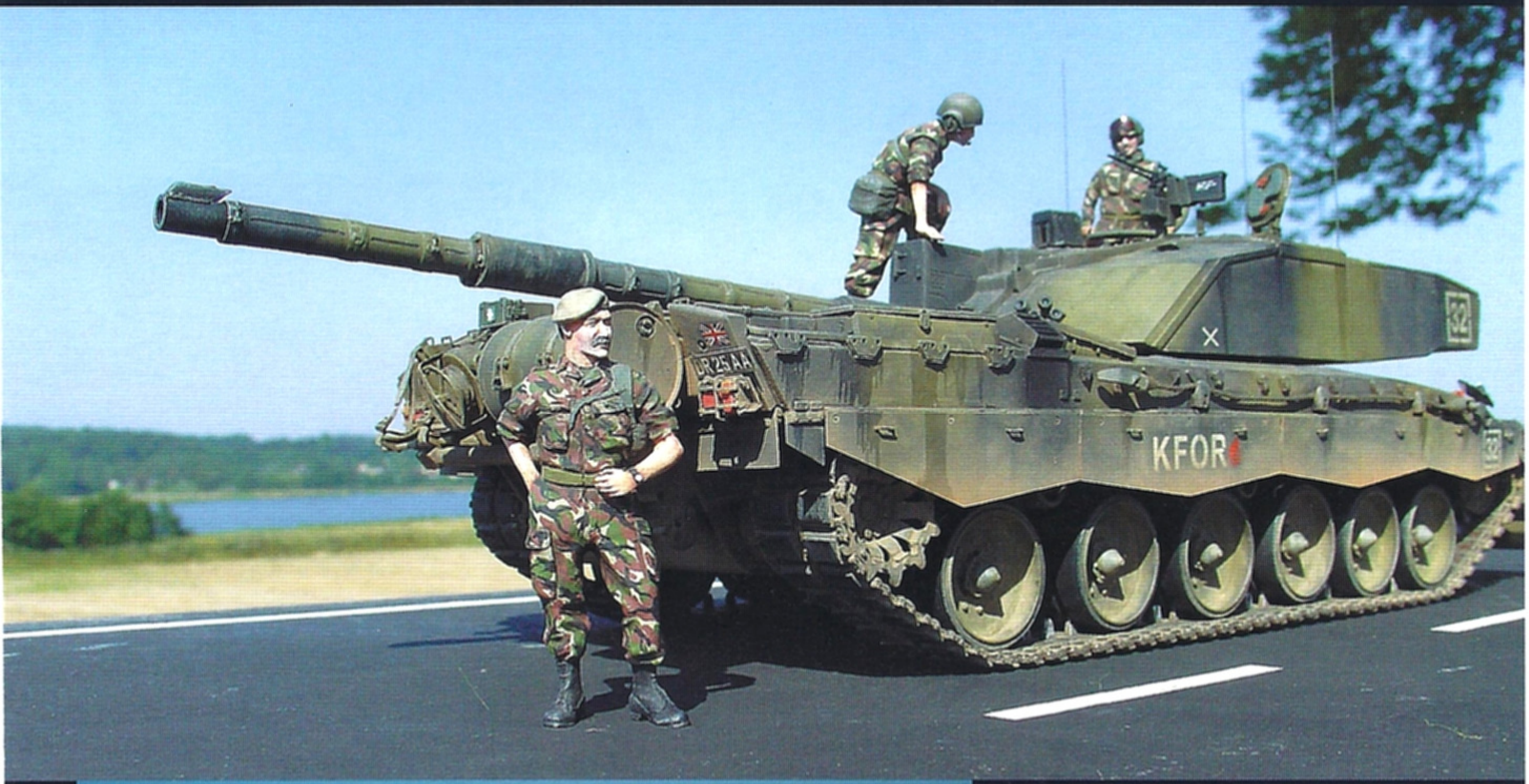


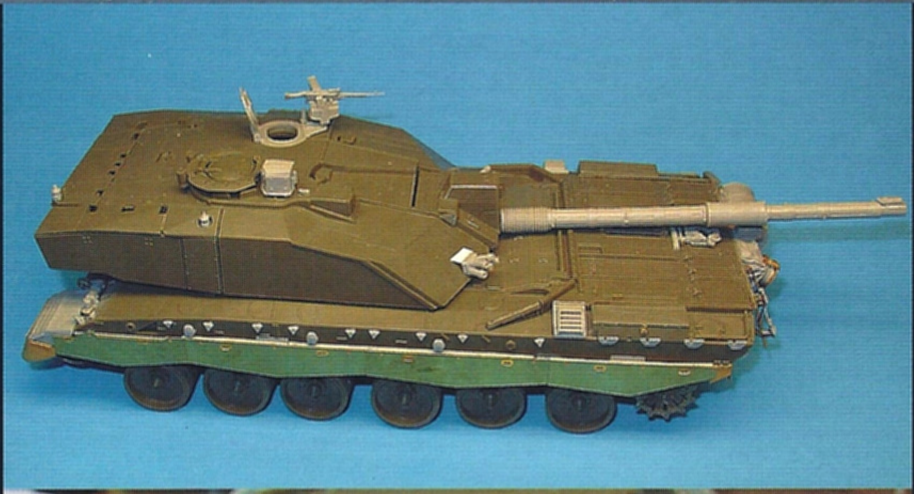
The armament of Challenger II is most impressive. The main weapon is the Royal Ordnance L30 120 mm gun with an effective range of 9km. It can fire most conventional modern 120 mm tank ammunition, including the controversial DU (Depleted Uranium) round.

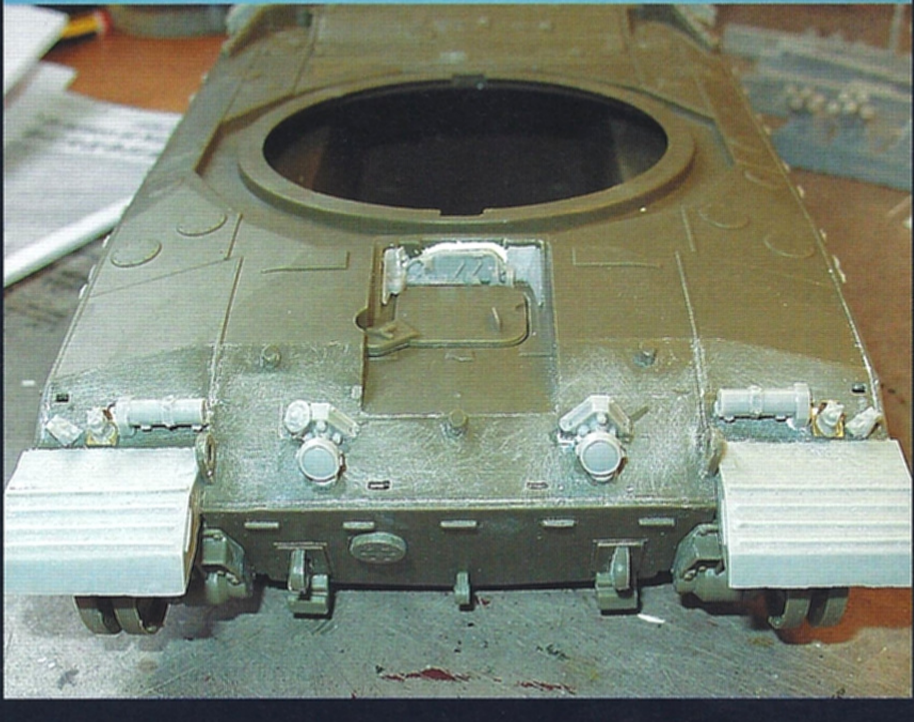
Additional armament is a coaxial Hughes 30mm chain gun, very similar to the one on the Apache helicopter, and a MG L37 7.62mm machine gun with 4000 rounds mounted on the commander's cupola. The Challenger is the heaviest and best-protected tank in the NATO Arsenal and has gained its reputation through many peacekeeping missions in war torn former Yugoslavia and lately in Operation Telic, the UK component of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The base for my model is the Trumpeter kit. This kit is by far the cheapest version on the market so I wanted to see just how good this low price offering really is. Surfing the net I found that the Scottish company Accurate Armour had put quite some effort into updating the Trumpeter kit-I could not resist the temptation and obtained two sets. One regular update set for a British KFOR tank and one for the Pearson Combat dozer blade. Fittingly armed for the purpose and filled with enthusiasm, I set out to build a trustworthy replica of this mighty machine.

Available Kits







There are 3 kits on the market which are interesting for Challenger 2 builders, one being Tamiya's new kit of an Operation Telic Challenger 2 which is a very good kit. In my opinion the best available Challenger 2 is the full resin kit from Accurate Armour which is really a heavy weight-also with its price tag-almost ten times the price of the Trumpeter kit.

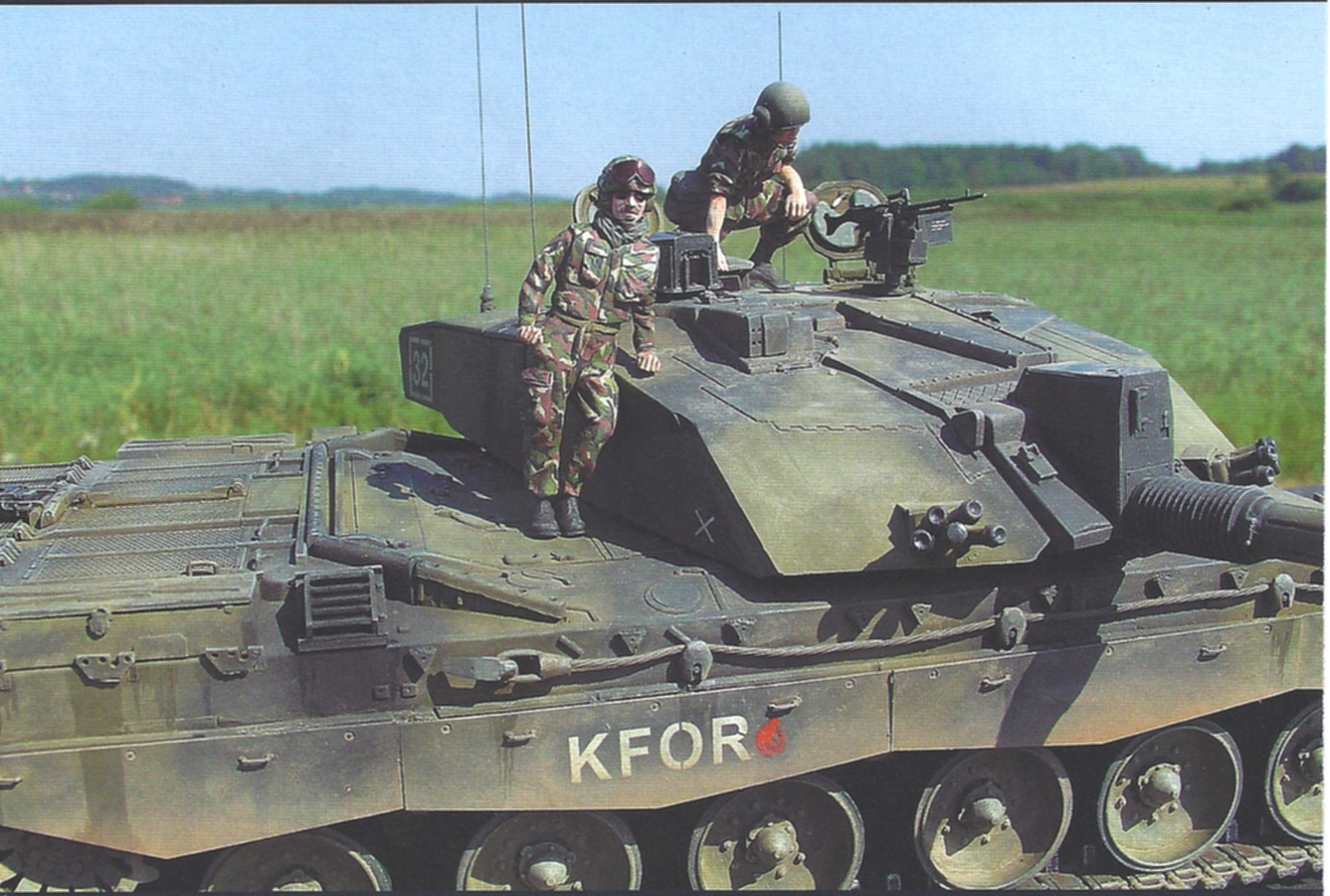
Update

The update sets I used are from Accurate Armour. The first one is set A 053 with the thin edged side skirts and a new main gun and set A 032, which contains a resin Pearson Engineering Combat Dozer Blade. The figures are also from the AA range. I like the human angle in my modelling and these figures served the purpose just right.

Finally I used lenses for the headlights from MV Lenses, LS 21 3,5mm Diameter

Construction

The construction went smoothly and really poses no problem to the average modeller.



I started with the running gear and hull. The road wheels are all separately hinged, which poses interesting possibilities for diorama projects.

The vinyl tracks are great and I decided to use them on my model even though there are aftermarket single link tracks available.

The rear wall of the Challenger II is busy, filled with detail and really the focal point of the model. The AA set provides a lot of items for this, especially the big fuel drums carried on each side which are cast as single pieces and do not have to be glued together. The advantage of this is obvious. In my research material I found a lot of Challengers only have one of the two drums attached . I thought this looked pretty cool and decided that this was exactly the way my Challenger should be displayed. I cut off the clamps from the spare barrel and mounted them on metal foil strips to simulate the empty mounting point for the drum. This greatly enhances realism on the model. Next stage is the closing of the hull, which is no problem either. The Trumpeter parts overall fit is very good and really surprised me. I would have expected more trouble from a cheap kit like Trumpeter's.

Next on the program is the turret. I had to correct the angle of the thermal image box mounted on top of the gun. This should be sloped on the sides, whereas Trumpeters are straight all the way up. The one-piece 120 mm gun from the AA set is also an improvement on the kit gun, which is not bad, but has to be glued together from several parts. The AA brass side skirts are really the major improvement on the kit, which provides both sides in too thick one-piece castings. The 5 brass parts on each side are all single mounted and very delicate and they really look good on the model. I liked the Challenger with the Dozer blade and I fitted an AA Pearson Dozer on mine. Again here the Trumpeter blade is not bad, but AA`s is better.

Painting and Weathering

I chose one of the versions provided by Trumpeter-call sign Three Two, B Squadron, Royal Scots Dragoons, 7th Armoured Brigade of the first UK Armoured Division, stationed in Fallingbostel, Germany. In January 2000 this unit loaded their Challenger MBTs on train wagons and deployed to Kosovo as part of NATO`s Peacekeeping Force.

I primed my Challenger with Testors Primer grey and chose after this Humbrol H155 and H33 for the European camouflage pattern. I stuck with the building instructions as to how the pattern should form because this matched pretty well with most of my research material. I decided on soft sprayed demarcations between the

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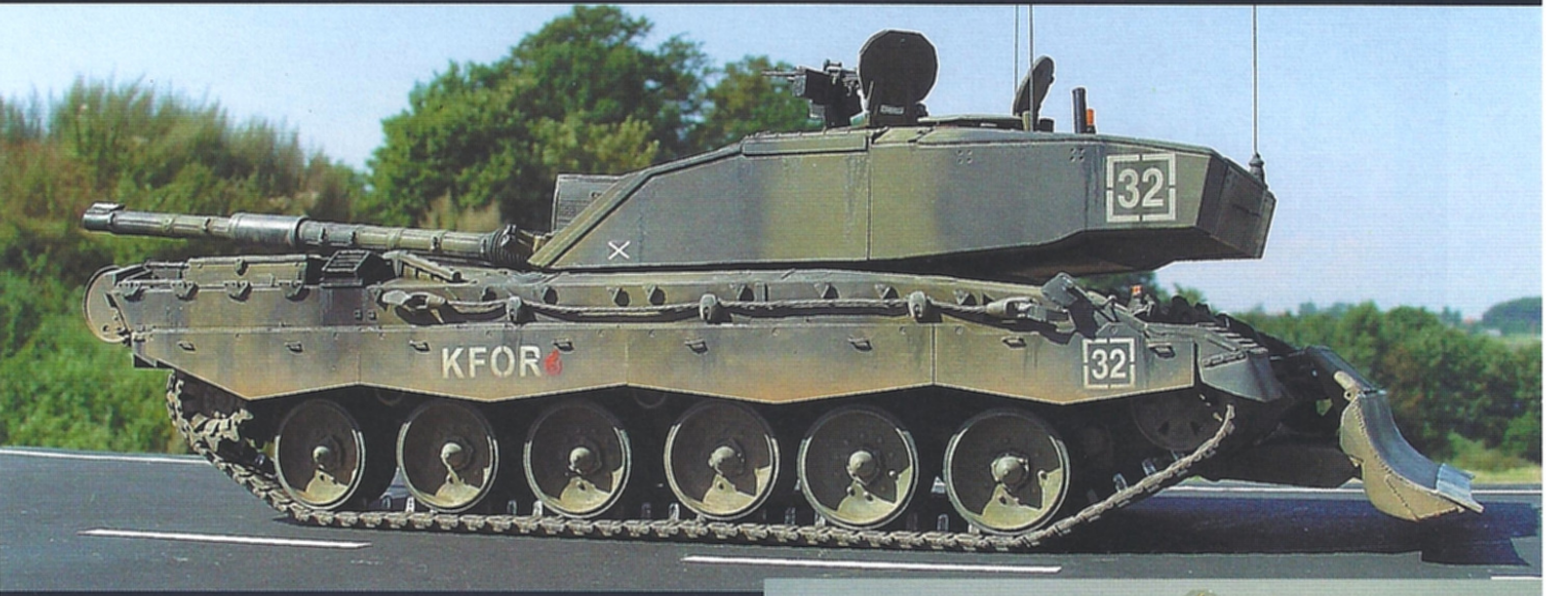


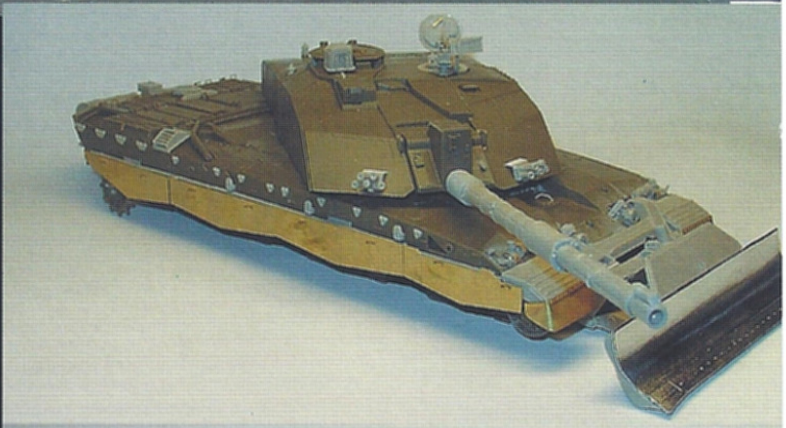
colours, but I have seen evidence of hard edged colours within the same Squadron. One will have to check research photos on this matter.
After this I had to add the clear coat to accept the decals. The washes were done with a water/ink solution to start with and continuing with a Turpentine/ Raw Umber oil colour solution. Finally the tank was 'dusted'. I over sprayed the model with Matt Earth from Testors. The surface was disturbed and softened up with a soft brush soaked with a little turpentine immediately afterwards to give it that uneven dirty look. Following this I sprayed a darker earth colour on the sides and rear where the vehicles normally create most dust.

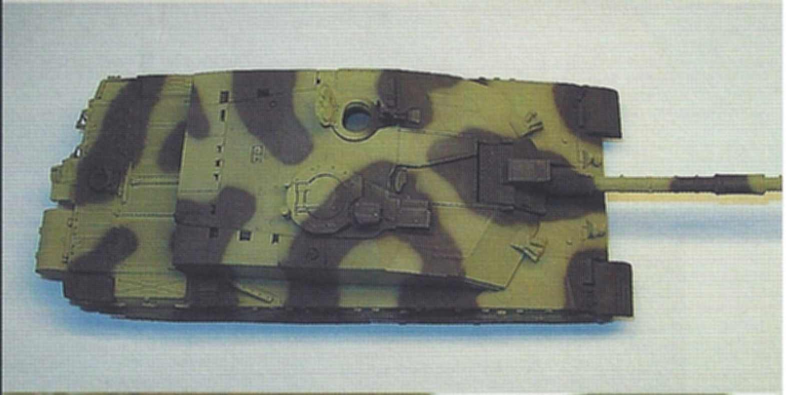
Final Montage

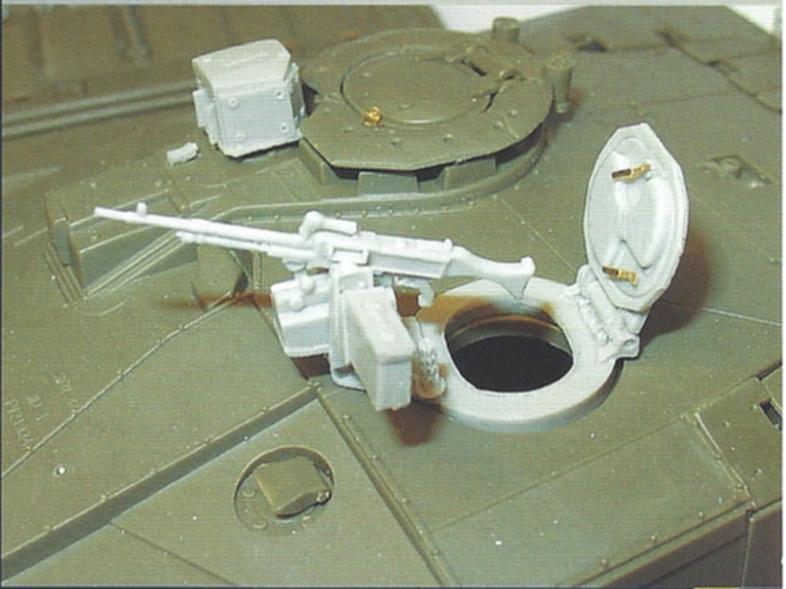
Final montage consists of the addition of side mirrors, antennas, warning light, headlights, weather sensor, towing cables and the figures. I decided that my crew should wear camouflage suits instead of the olive green suits sometime seen on crewmembers. It is more challenging to paint this pattern, true, but I think it looks better. I added the glass for the commander's goggles from a piece of negative film and both figures had the helmet microphones added.

Round Up

The Trumpeter kit was fun to build and the AA updates served their purpose well, even though it raised the price tag on my model to almost double. Still there is a long way up to the price of the AA Full Resin kit and not everybody will be willing to walk that extra mile. The Asian version spiced up with some Scottish refinement can be turned into a fine replica of a great fighting machine!







PRAIRIE EAGLE '99

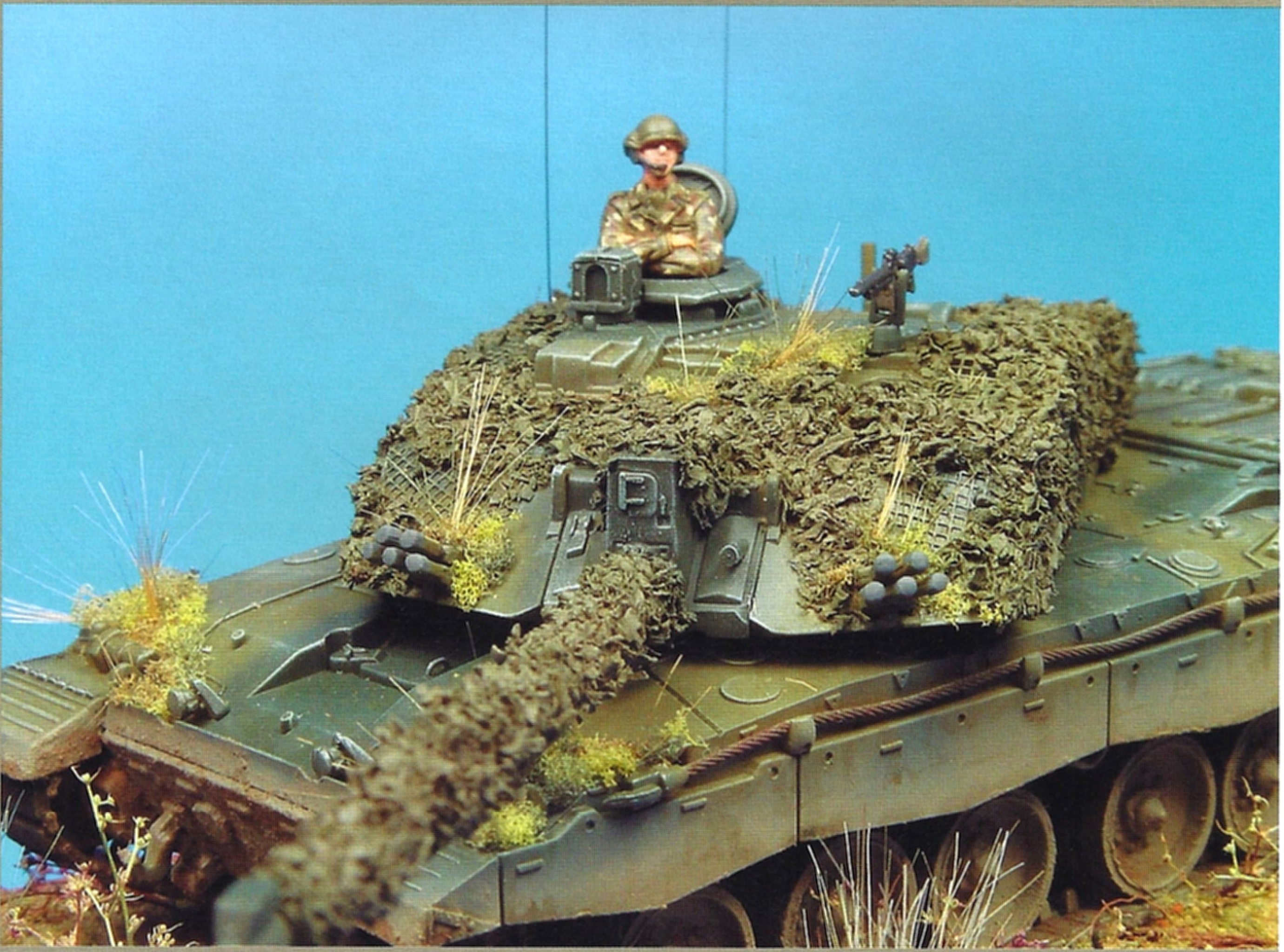
Small Scale **CHALLENGER II**
Modelled by **David Bílek**

Initially I did not like the Dragon kit as I didn't think the details were as sharp as Revell's Chally 1, combined with some minor mistakes in turret shape and the inclusion of one piece soft track. I had no decent references either but a Canadian friend who is a fan of British tanks and uniforms lent me some magazines, along with a Concord book on the Challenger. After studying the photos and reading the history of the tank I became more interested in the vehicle, although I preferred the Operation TELIC configuration with huge side skirts and painted in the desert sand color.

I wanted to use this project to test some new techniques. This is result of my experiments, unfortunately without any step-by step photos, because I did not want to lose time by taking of photos of a "test piece" when the results were uncertain.

Construction

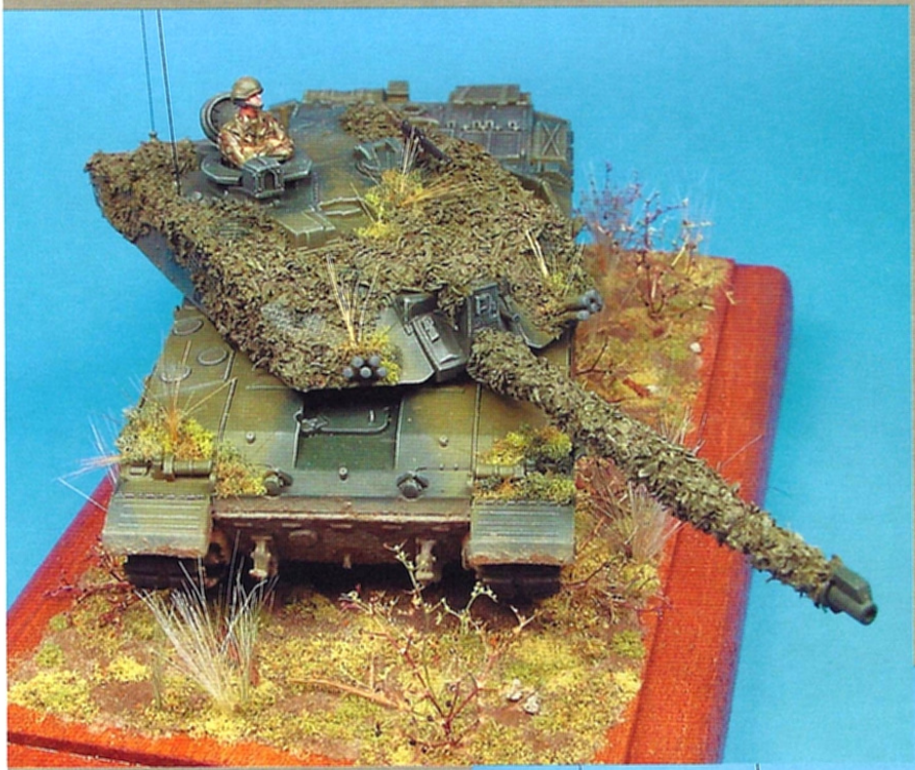
The hull goes together easily and without any troubles, the fit is so good that I did not use any filler, but I had to carefully clean every part to remove mould lines with a sharp knife and then sandpaper. The tracks gave me a shock – once I had glued both ends together with superglue I tried to fit them on the wheels only to discover that the tracks are about 10-15mm too short! The tension was so high once fitted, that the idlers and sprockets started to bend. To resolve this I cut both tracks again and I used superglue to bond them to each wheel-the gap was hidden by the side skirts. I added all the small parts to the hull, replacing the towing cables with Karaya ones and I reworked the poor additional fuel tanks.

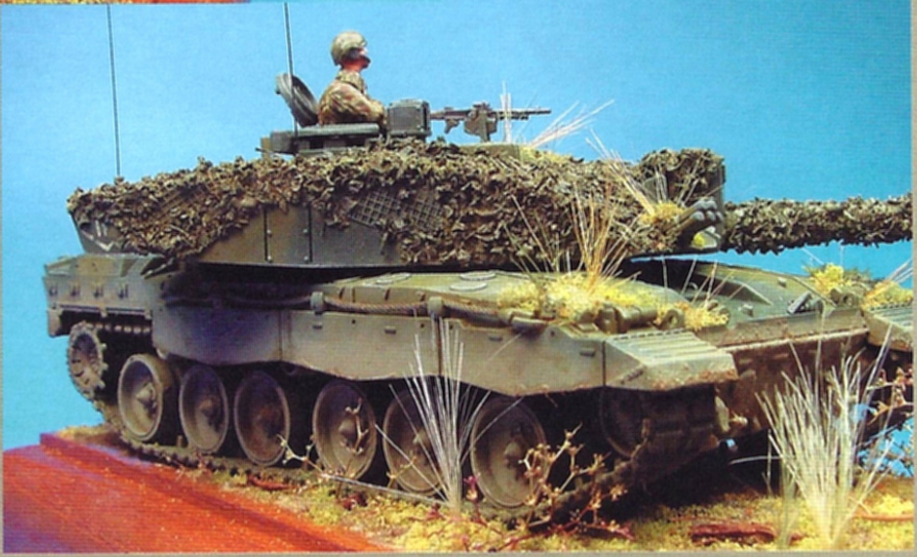


adding dry mud and dust. I oversprayed all lower hull and running gear with Tamiya Buff and then added a mixture of MIG pigments. The camo netting was sprayed with a brown-green color and I picked out small details and tracks with a fine brush.

Finishing

I decided to add a figure of one of the "masters of camouflage" for a more realistic look to the tank. I dug out a nice white metal figure by an unknown manufacturer and I painted the face with Testors skin tones and the DPM camouflage uniform using Vallejo paints. The tank was finished by adding a machine gun mount and two antennas. Then I added Woodland Scenic turf and grasses in order to reproduce added camouflage grass, mud and turf.



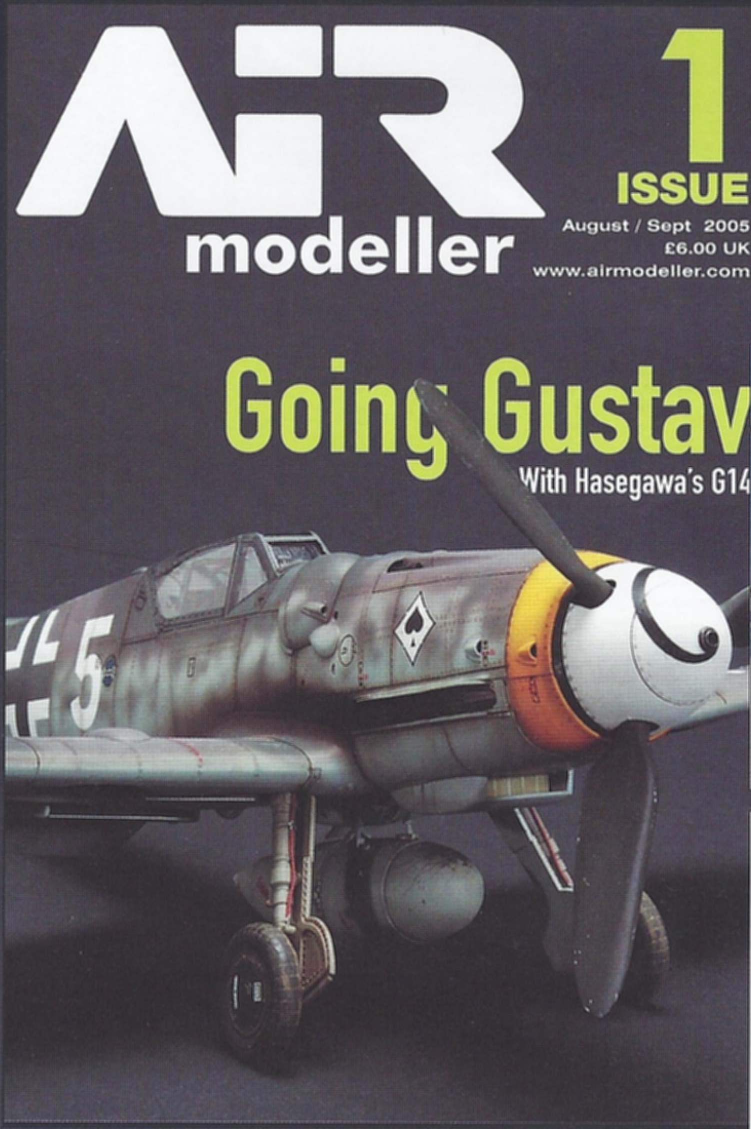


Base

This was first time I had used Woodland Scenics materials and so I tried to use all the different products. Firstly I applied Axson two component epoxy paste in thin layers on my wooden plinth. Then I sculpted groundwork and made track-prints using the Challenger as the stamp. After the paste had cured, I started to work on the mud and grass. For the muddy areas I used MIG pigments with turpentine in order to maintain the same mud shades as on the tank with wet mud darker and dry mud lighter. Then I added turf in several colors (yellow grass, burnt grass and blended grass) and cut down hairs (again in several colors) to reproduce tall grass. Bushes were made from teloxis (sea foam) and finally I added several small stones and small pieces of wood. The scenery was done and I was slightly disappointed, that there wasn't enough space for a small tree, because I had really enjoyed working with the Woodland Scenics products.

Conclusion

It is interesting that this model looks so good to me, even though I did not make any special efforts to create a great model. My Chally 2 looks far better than other kits I have built where I wasted time correcting of all the mistakes, adding super details or opening engine covers. Maybe we all waste too much time with these things and we should get back to basics and concentrate on getting things finished!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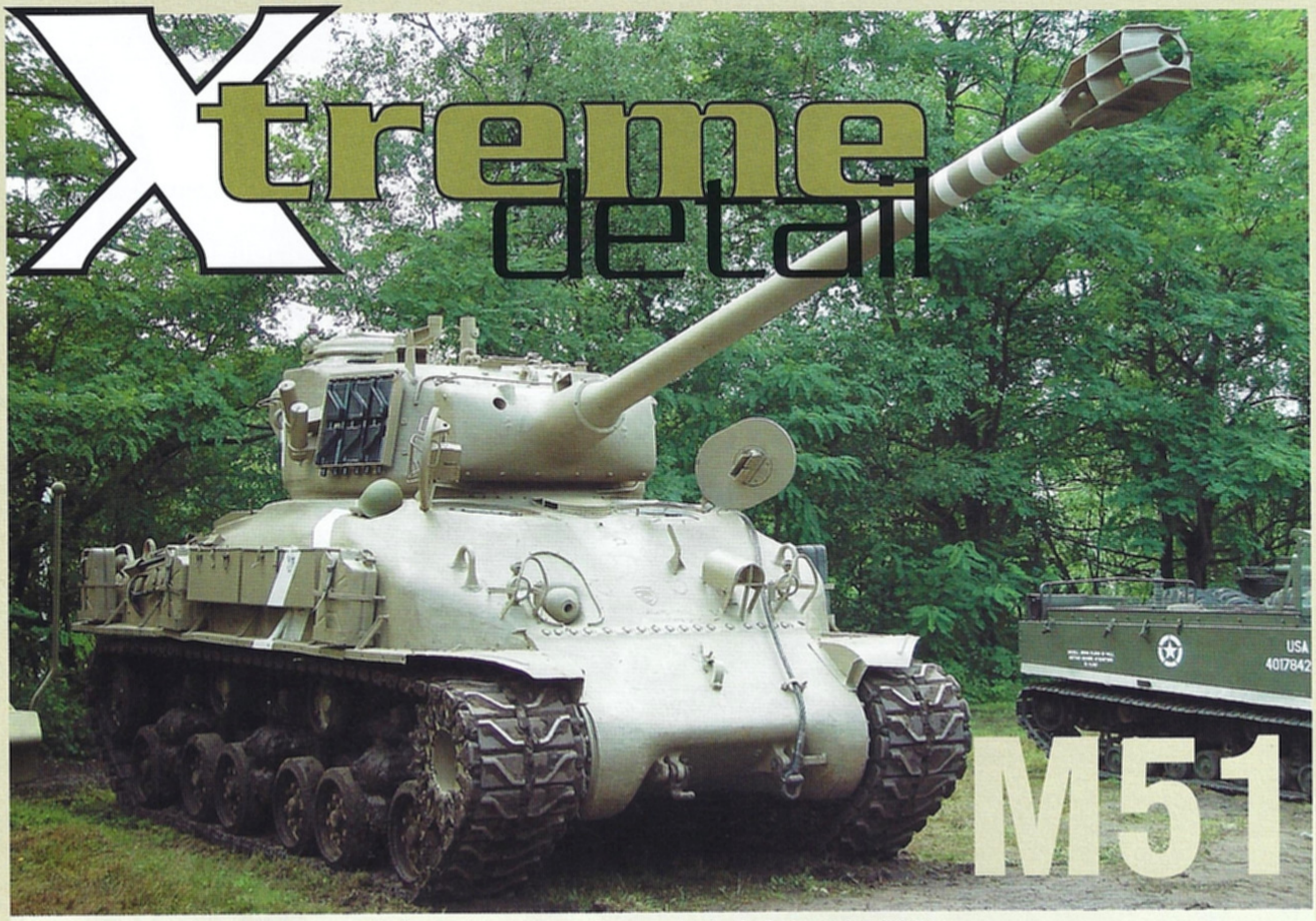
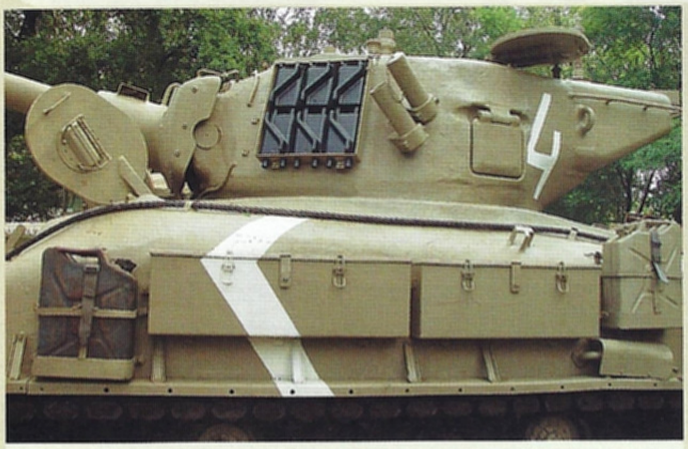
Xtreme detail

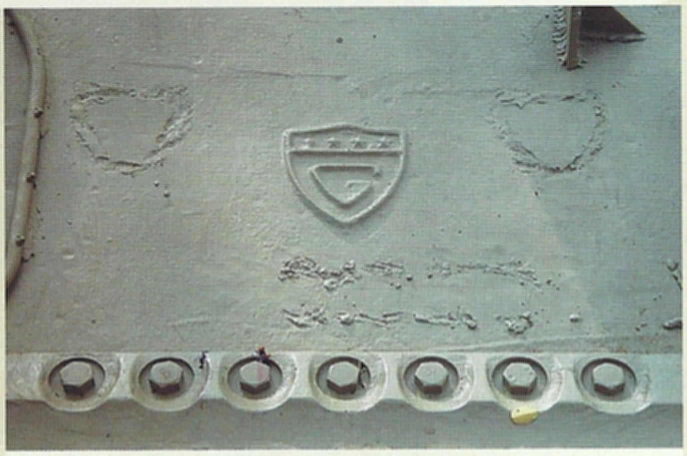
M51



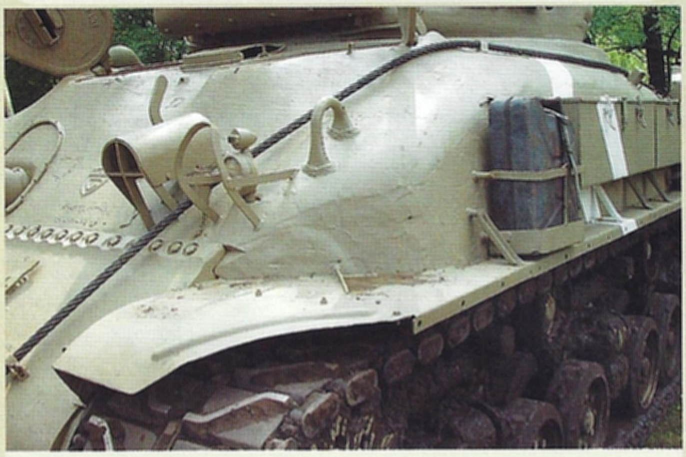
The M51Looks slightly incongruous in its sand grey camouflage against a lush green backdrop.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



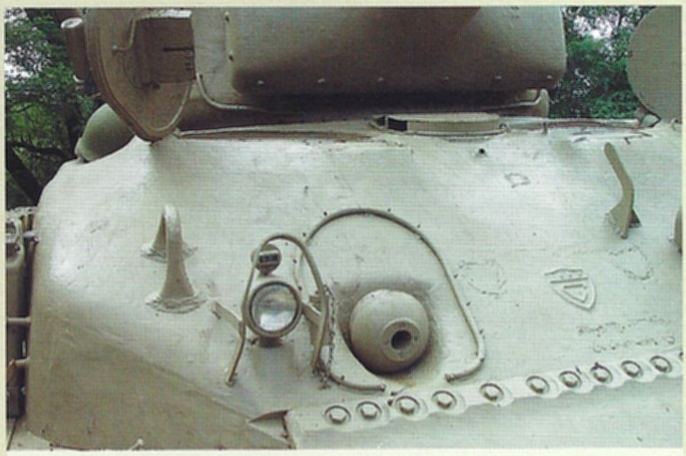
The stowage bins on the hull and the turret in profile.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



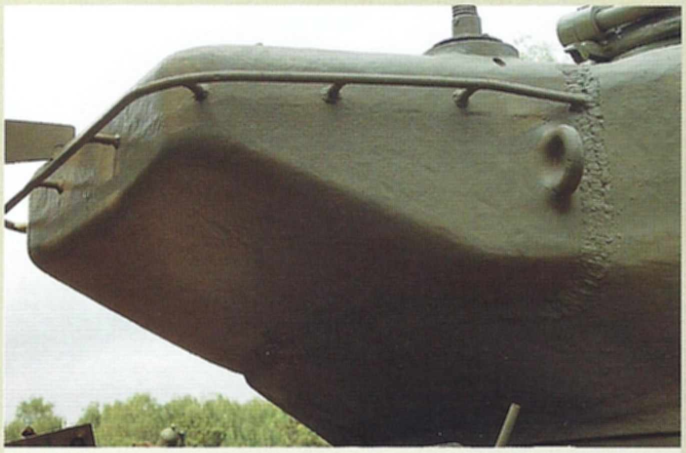
The hull was manufactured by the General Steel Castings Corporation (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

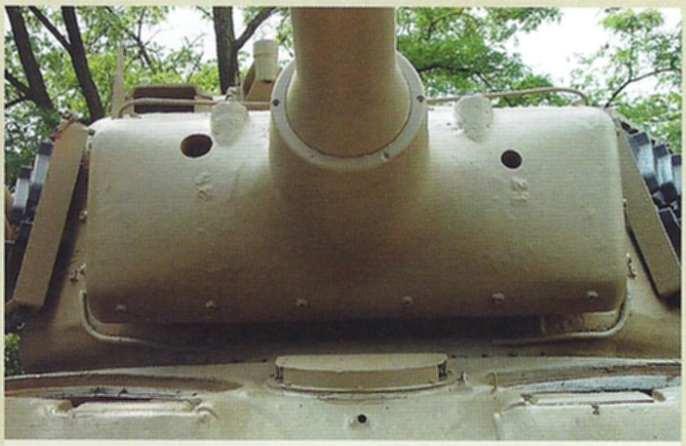


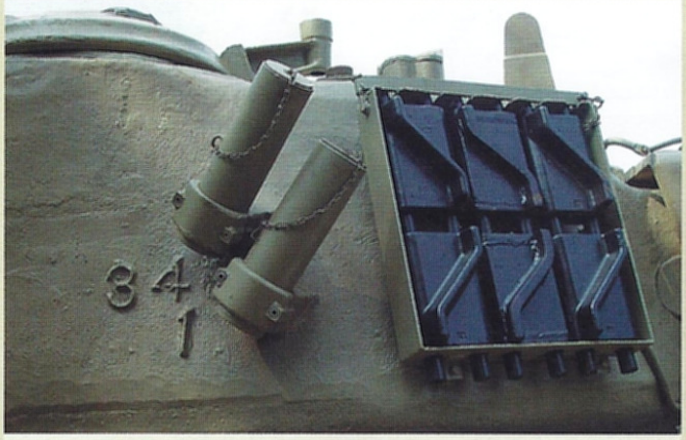
A close up view of the light fittings and front trackguards.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



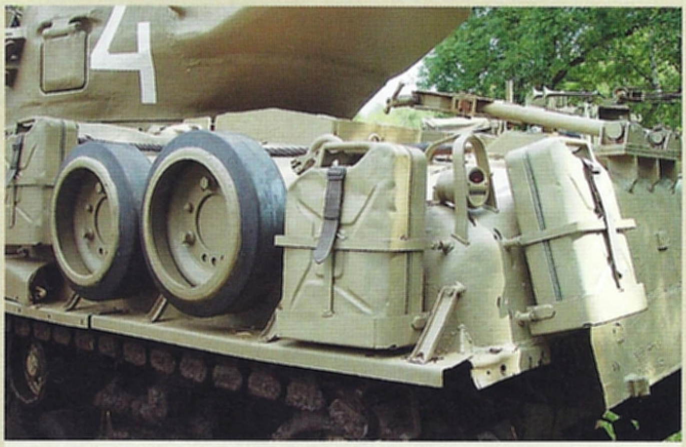
The bow MG mount with the mounting frame for the protective cover. Note the welds on the lifting eyes. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

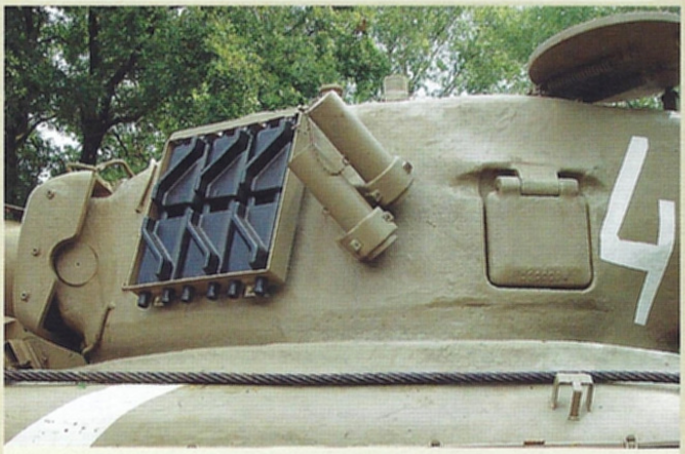

The turret bustle showing the prominent weld beads and stowage rail. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

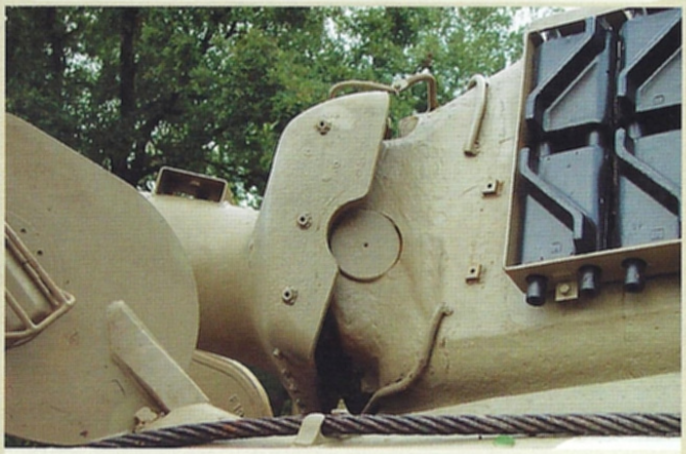

The mantlet showing the subtle casting numbers on either side of the barrel.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

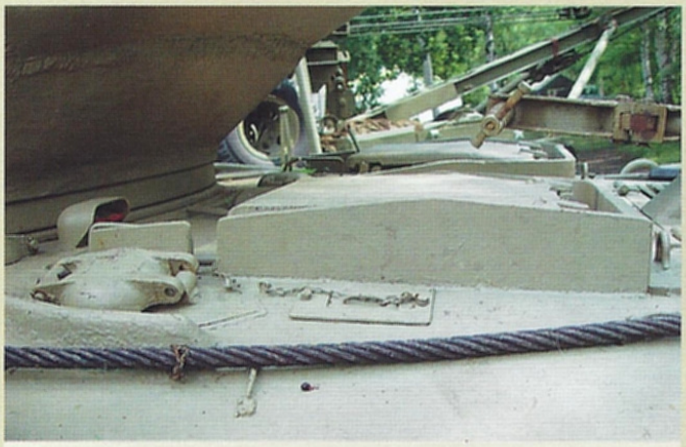


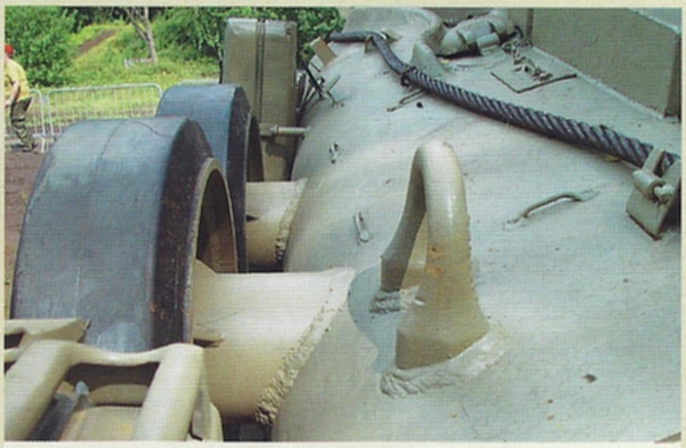
The casting numbers on the turret are clearly visible in this shot which also shows the smoke dischargers and track stowage to good effect. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

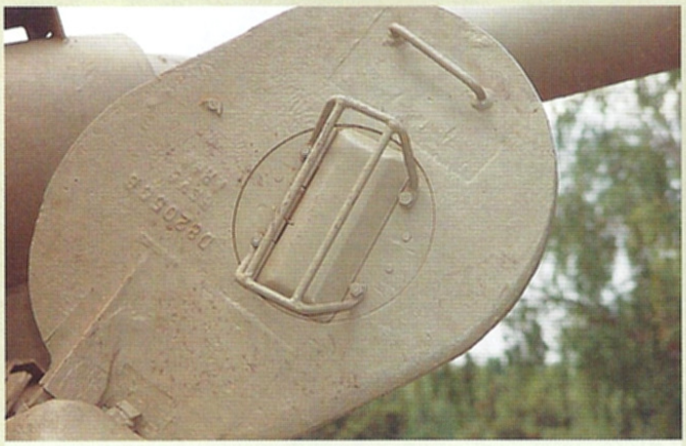

Notice here that the Jerry can racks are spaced away from the hull. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)


In this side view of the turret you can just make out casting numbers on the bottom edge of the pistol port.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

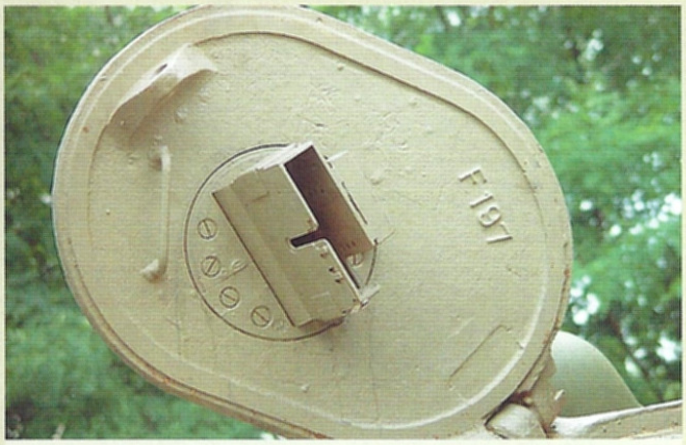

Detail of the mantlet and the fixing points for the cover.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)


A view looking across the engine deck under the turret bustle.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

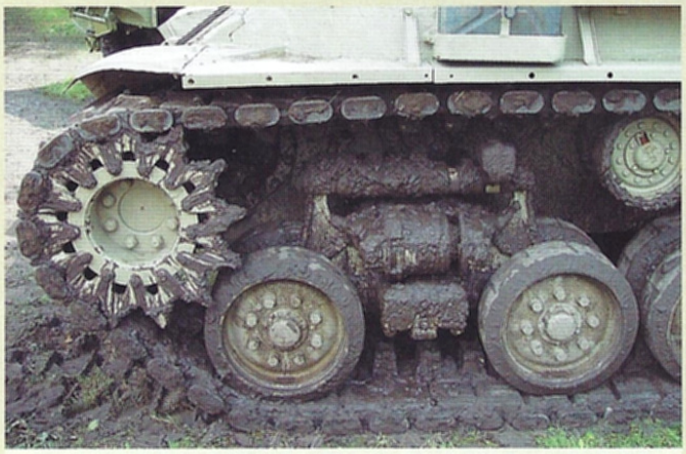

This view shows the mounting points for the spere roadwheels.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



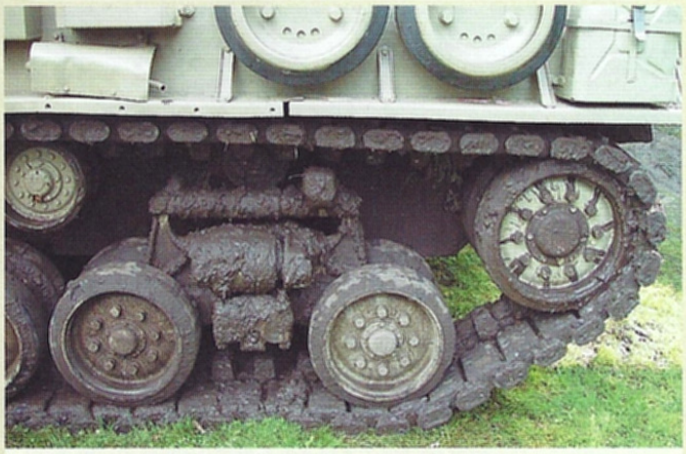
The outer face of one of the hull hatches. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



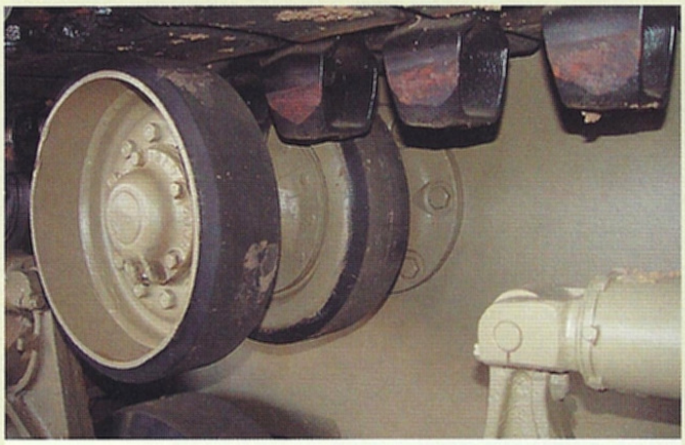
The inner face of the same hatch which does not have the periscope mounted. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



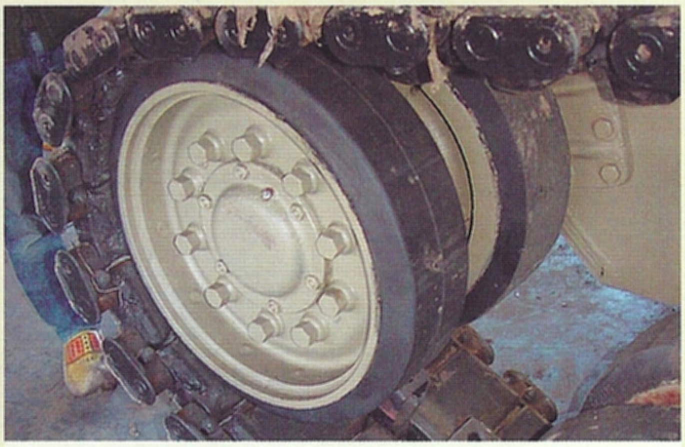
An overall view of the front suspension complete with mud. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



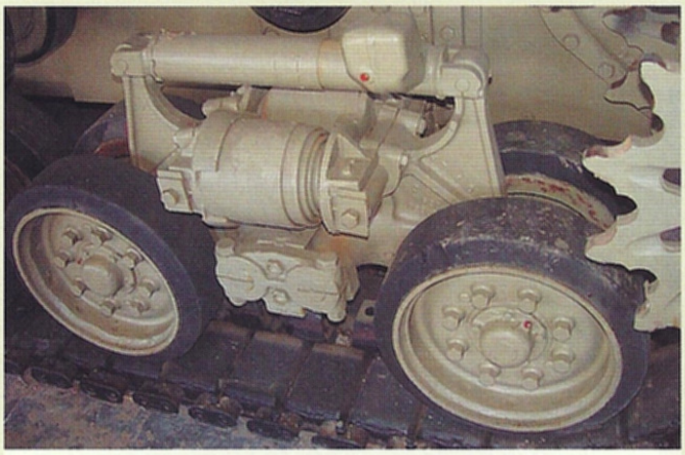
The rear suspension. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



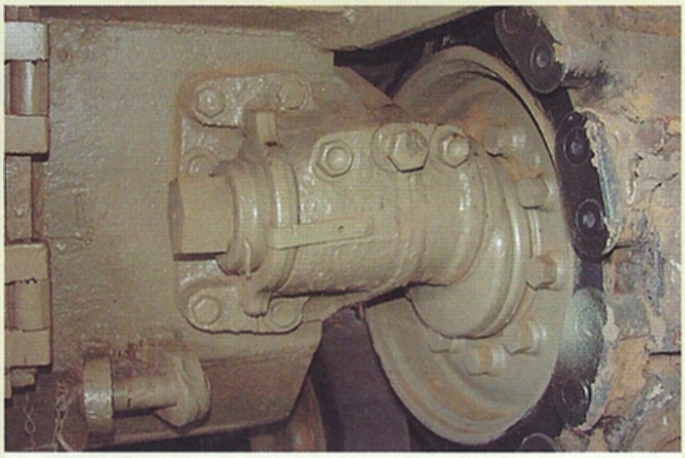
A detail of the return roller which also shows the hollow teeth on the tracks. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



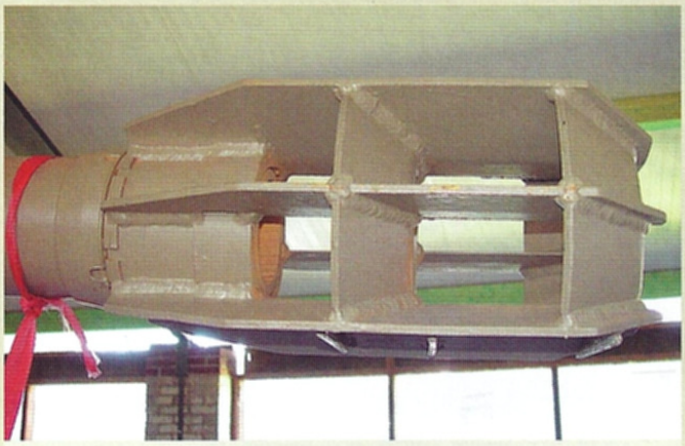
The idler wheel showing the moulding seemon the tire. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



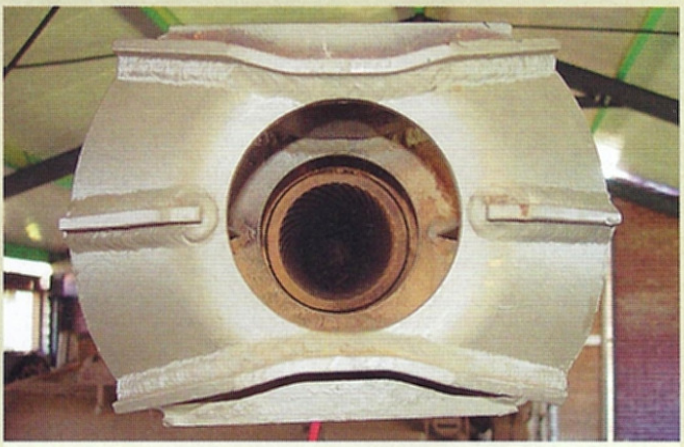
The roadwheel bogie assembly. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



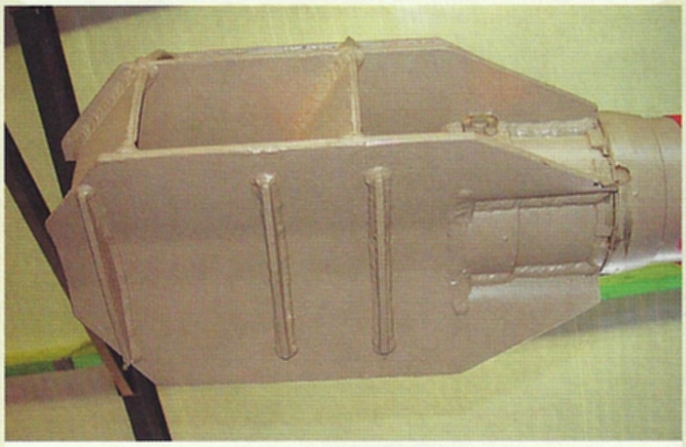
The mounting bracket for the idler wheel. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



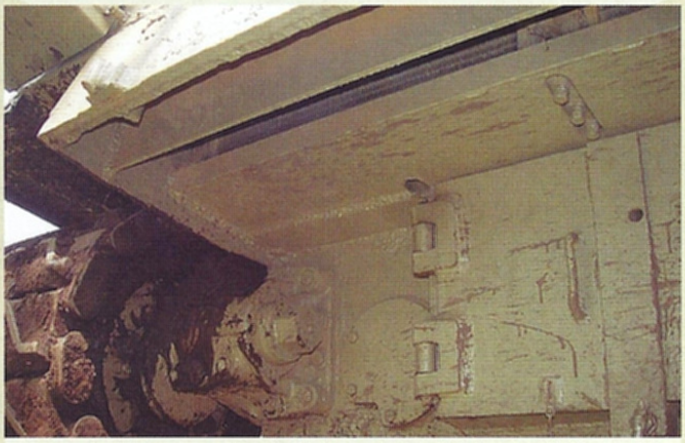
Surely the most aggressive looking muzzle brake on any vehicle.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



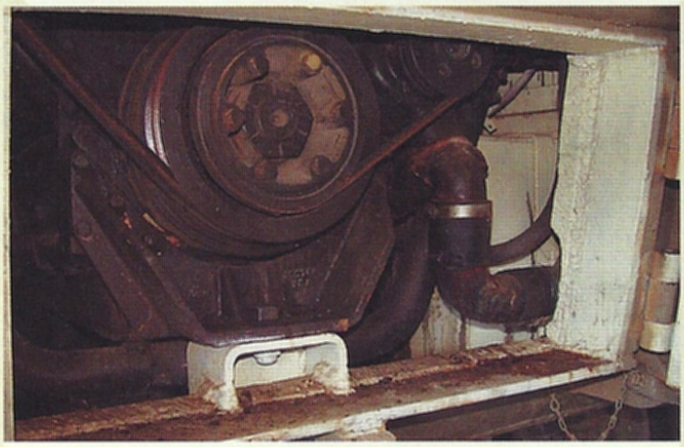
The business end of the muzzle brake.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



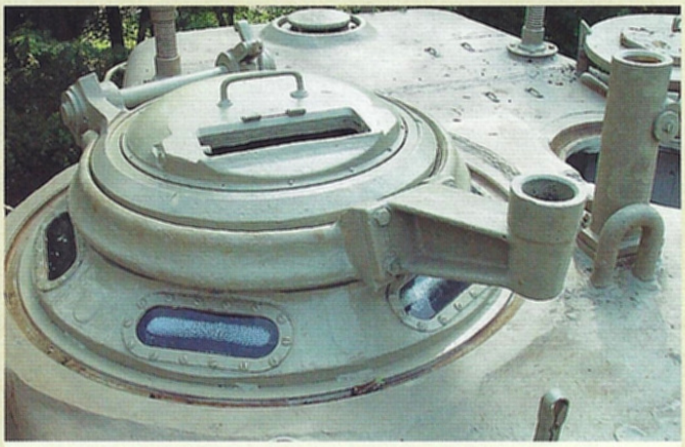
The underside of the muzzle brake.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



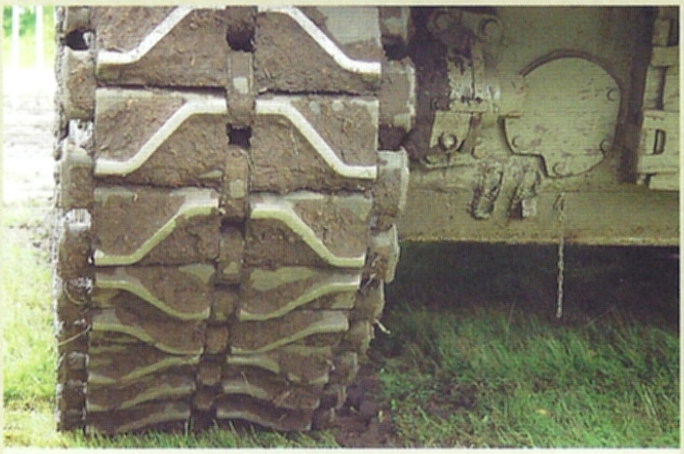
A view looking up under the hull overhang to the ventilation grills.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



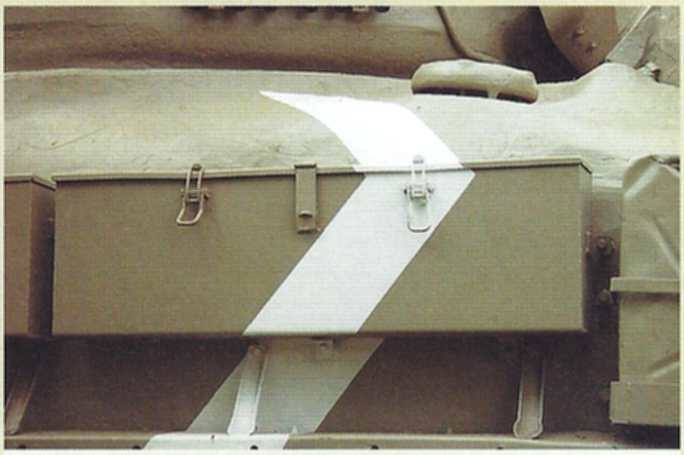
Looking inside the open engine access panels on the rear of the hull. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



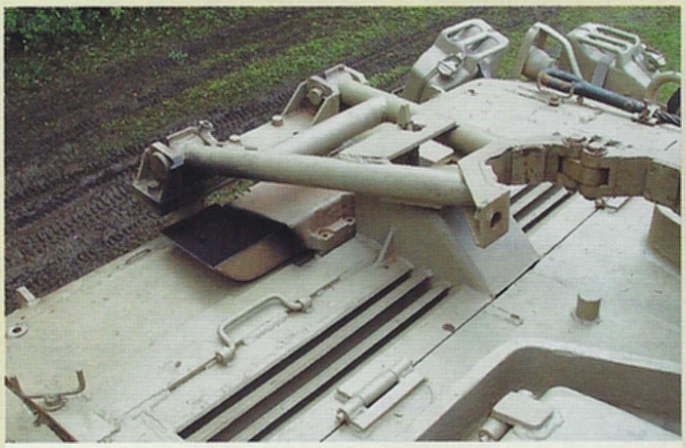
The cupola with MG mount. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

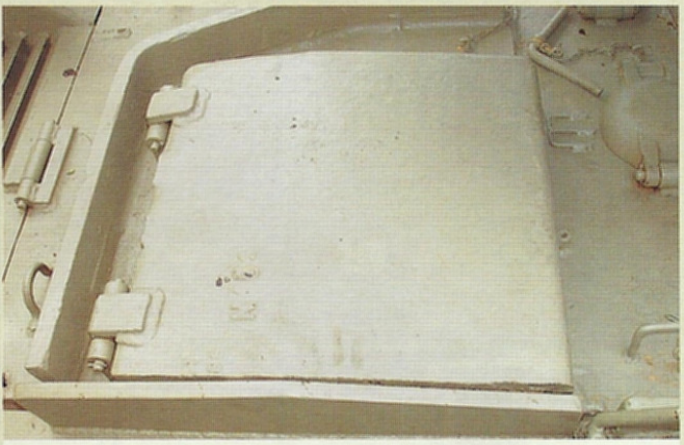


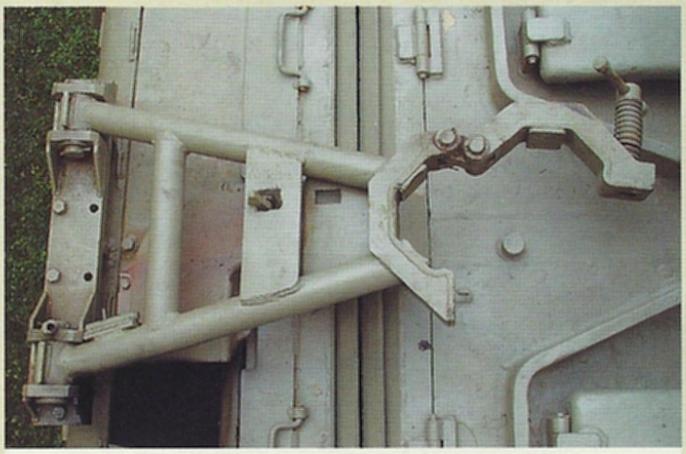
The tracks which seem to have been assembled in alternating directions. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

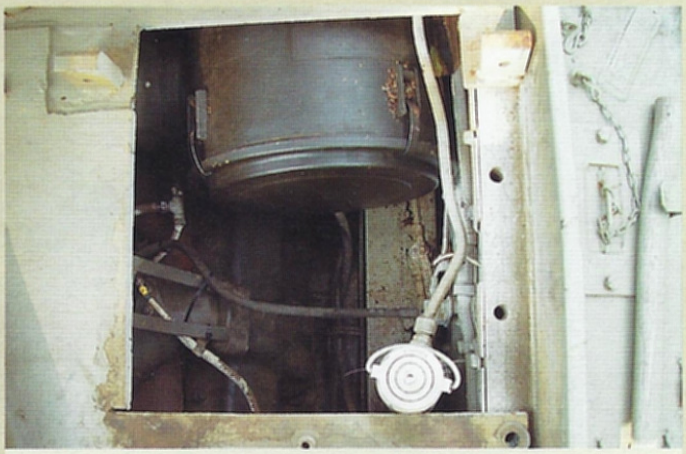


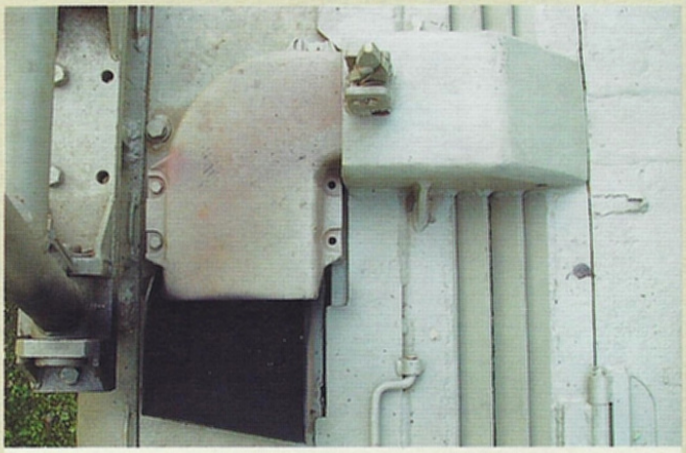
A close up of the hull stowage bins. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

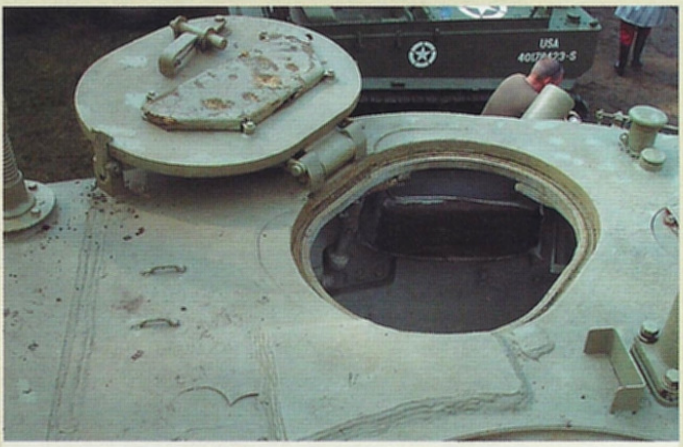

The gun travel lock folded over the exhaust outlet.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)


A close up of one of engine deck access hatches.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

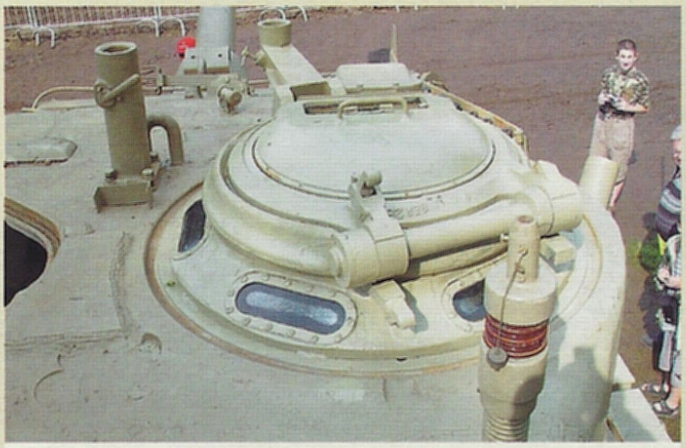

Another view of the gun travel lock. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

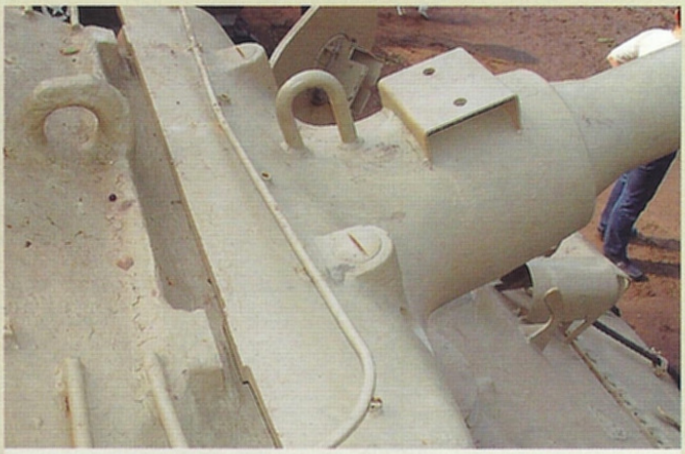

The view inside the opened access hatch. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

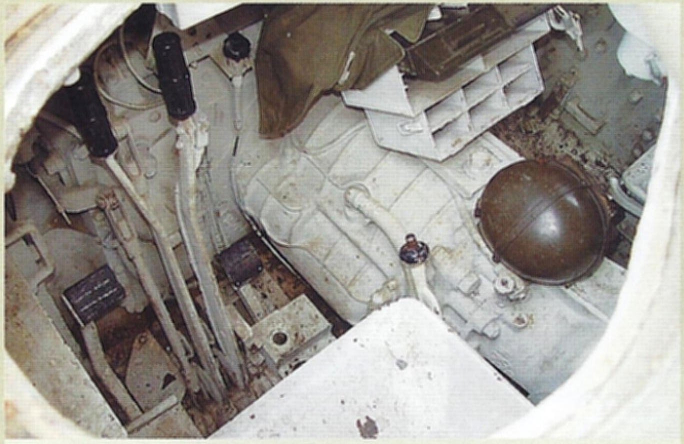

A close up of the exhaust outlet under the travel lock.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



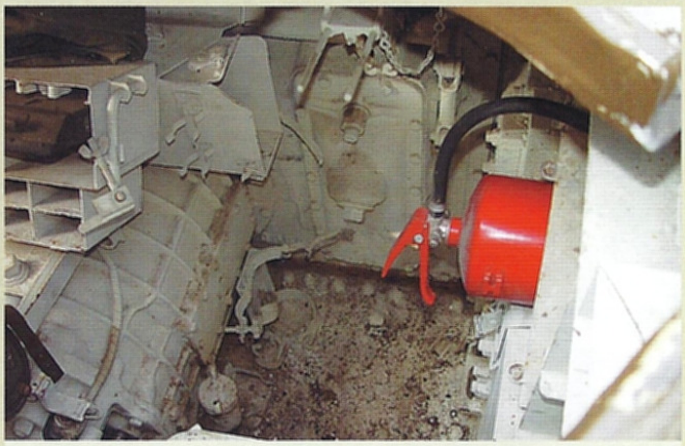
The open turret hatch with badly worn looking padding.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)


The Commander's cupola and detail of the aerial mount with its protective cap. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

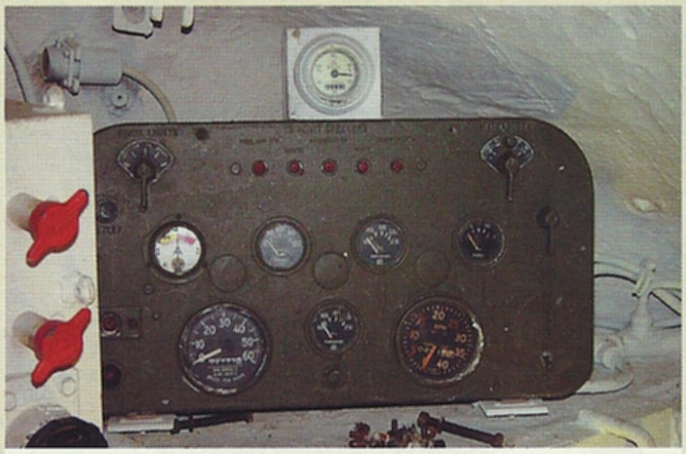

Looking down onto the gun mantlet showing the mounting bracket for the searchlight on top of the barrel. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



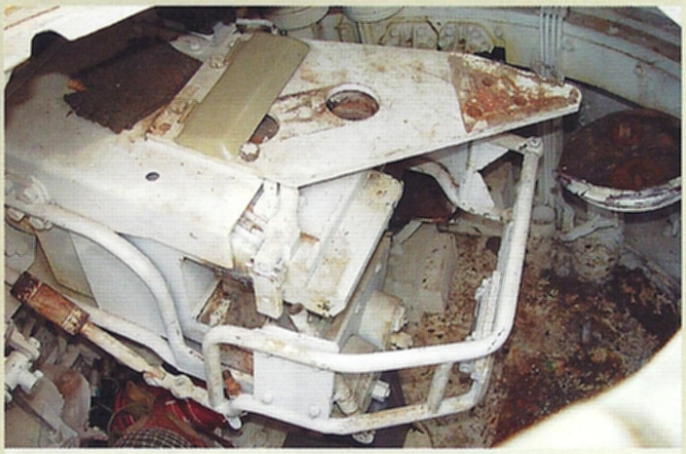
Looking down into the drivers compartment through the hatch.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



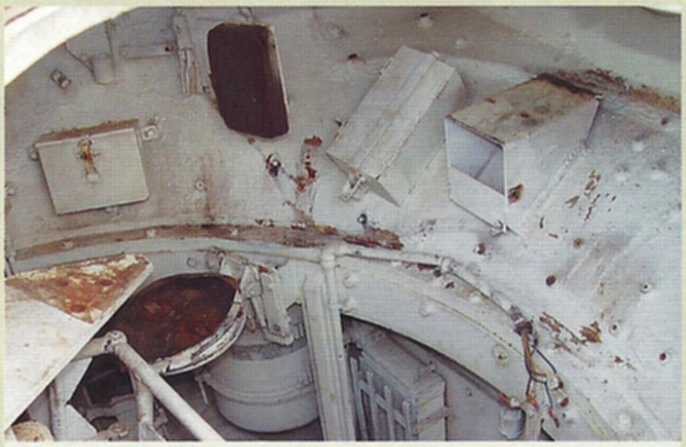
The co-drivers position.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



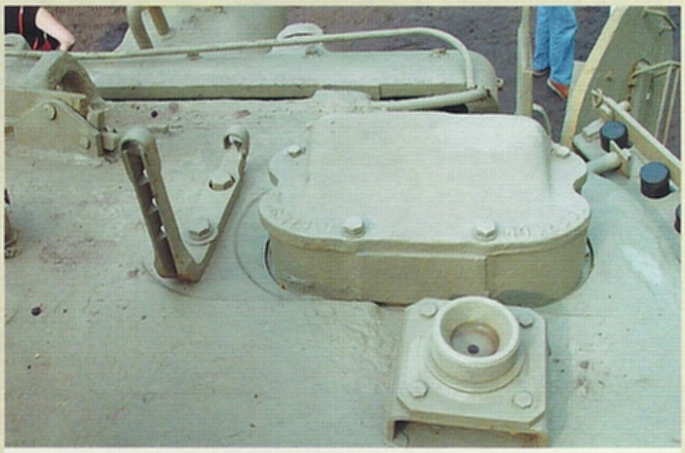
The drivers instrument panel. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



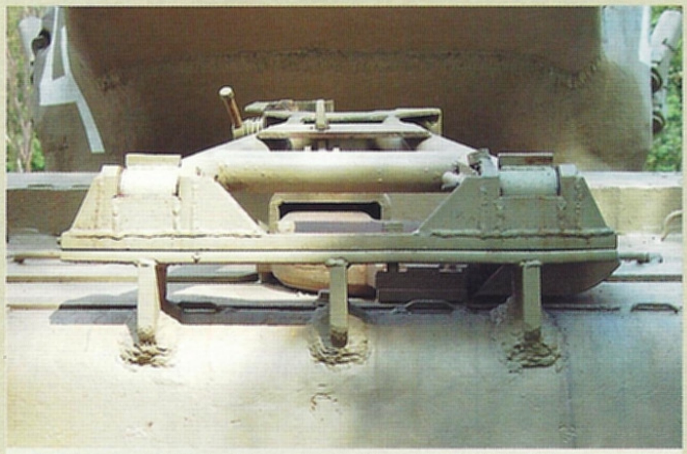
The massive breech filling the turret. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



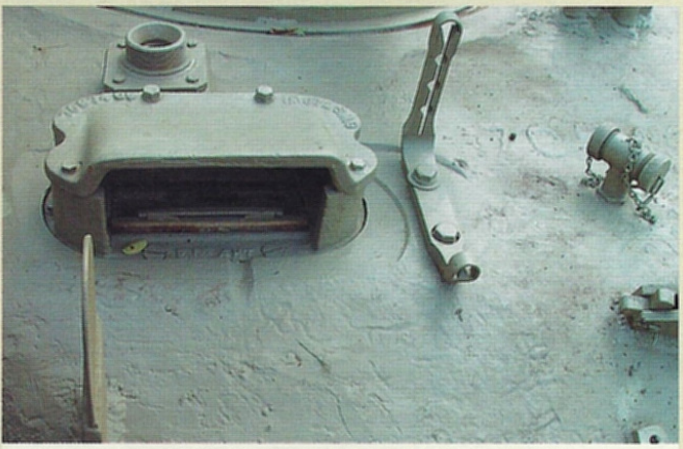
A view looking towards the rear of the turret.
(Photo Chris Hughes)



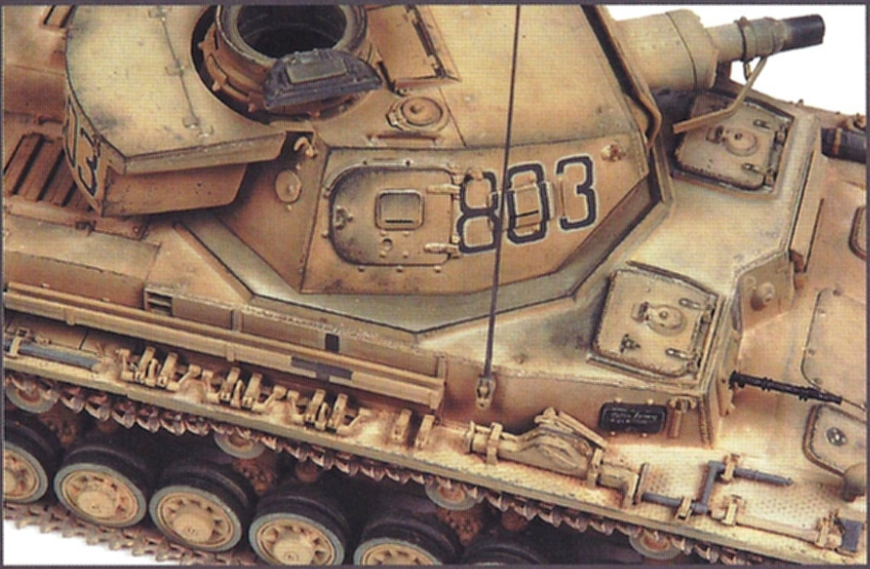
A close up view of the gunners periscope and sighting vane on the turret roof. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



The gun travel lock sits so far bock on the hull that it is mounted on these legs to compensate for the curve of the hull.
(Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)

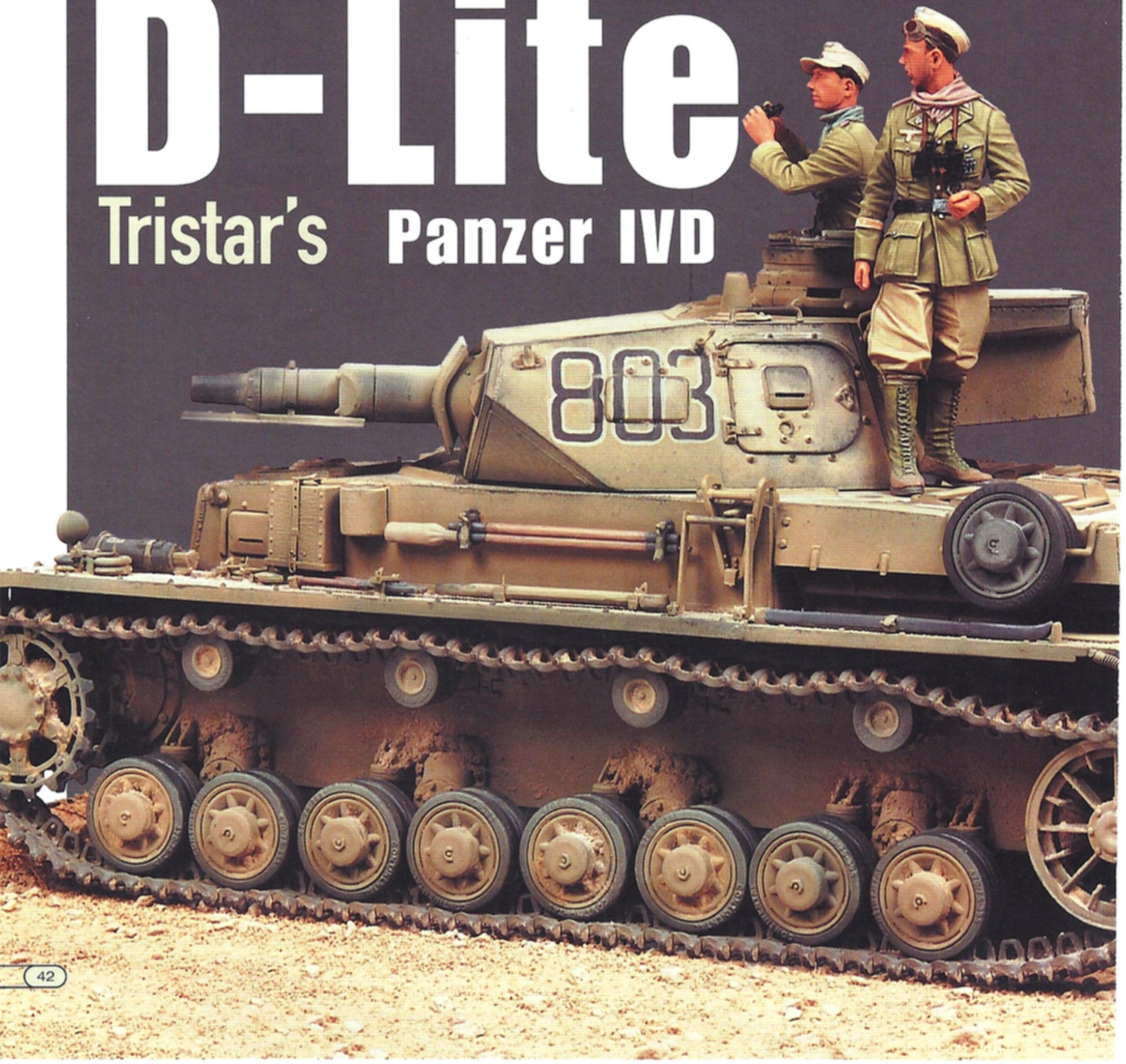


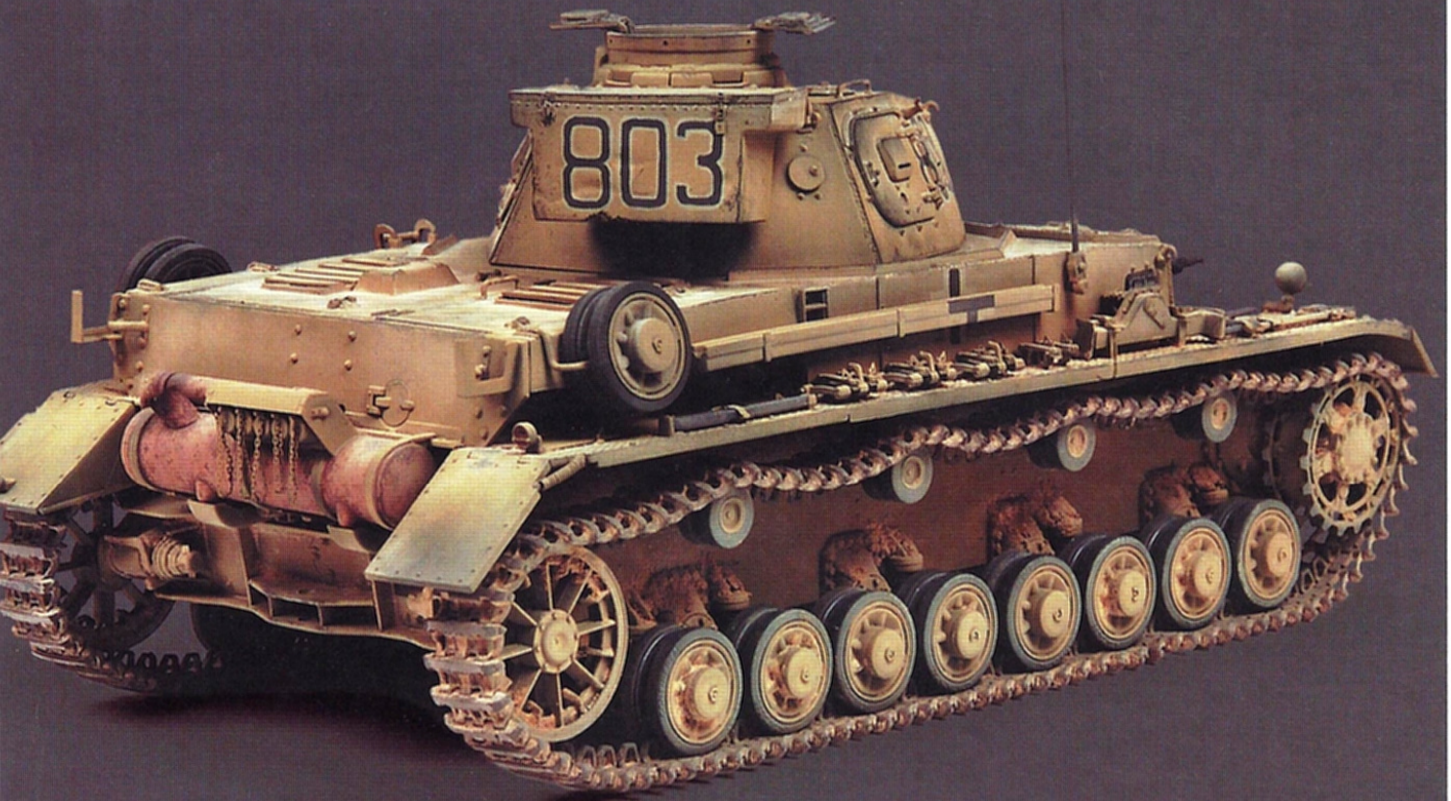
The gunners periscope on the turret roof. (Photo Jan-Willem de Boer)



D-Lite

Tristar's Panzer IVD





With delayed release dates it's been a while in arriving but has it been worth the wait ?

by David Parker

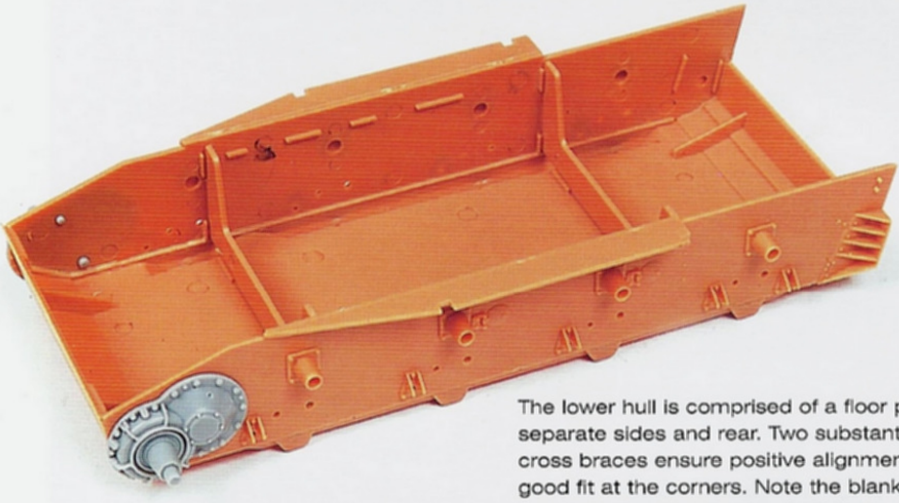
I am old enough to remember the release of the old Tamiya Panzer IV Ausf D kit from the mid 1970's. I finished mine in panzer grey and I was pretty happy with the result blissfully ignorant of all the dimensional inaccuracies, how things have changed!

This is Tristar's third full tank kit and it is very much state of the art. I got a real sense that it had been designed by enthusiasts rather than designers with no understanding of what the modeller wants. The kit is full of tiny details that you only come across as you work, the ring clips on the return rollers, the recessed screw heads, the mudflap clasps. This must be the first Panzer IV kit where I have not had to replace the hinge pin on the front mudflaps because they are correct. All hatches, access panels and visors are moulded separately which is a big help if you want to open things up and when you fit the transmission access panel on the glacis and see that it stands slightly proud it brings a smile to your face.

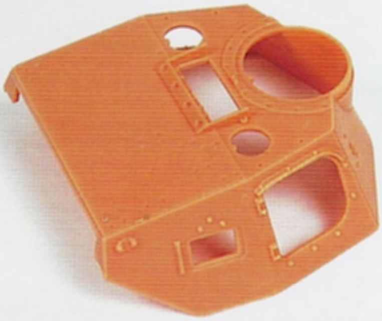
There are some very different solutions in this kit - the suspension is perhaps the biggest giving the modeller fully articulating roadwheels. It works very well the only downside is that it took me about 5 hours to assemble the roadwheels because of all the components that make up each wheel and bogie. The individual tires are very effective but there is a slight gap between them and the hub that needs to be filled but the finished results speak for themselves. The tool stowage is also different with individually moulded brackets for the bigger tools which contrary to my expectations work really well.

I was a little disappointed that there are no parts included to allow you model the North African versions but I went ahead and built one anyway. The kit is missing the minute fins on the ends of the track tensioning brackets and It would have been useful to have included the chains for the smoke dischargers on the etched fret that comes with the kit, but these are small points. It's not often I can build a kit without being tempted by aftermarket accessories but this is a kit you can build from the box, as our pictures will show, this kit really is a D-light.

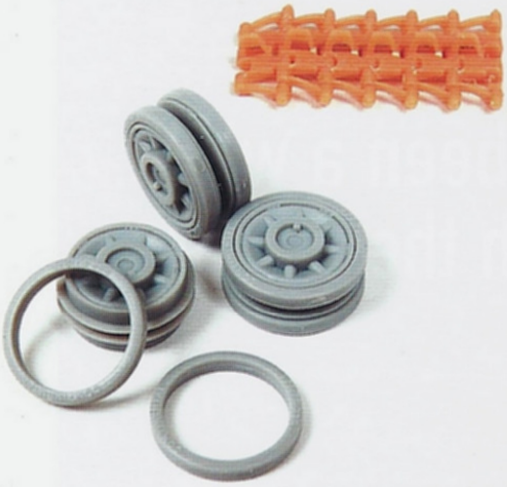
Tristar
Panzer IVD

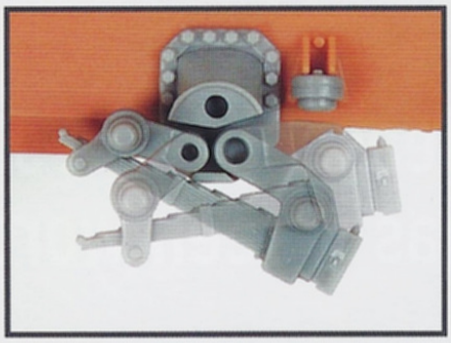


The lower hull is comprised of a floor pan with separate sides and rear. Two substantial cross braces ensure positive alignment and a good fit at the corners. Note the blanking panels for the sponson undersides.

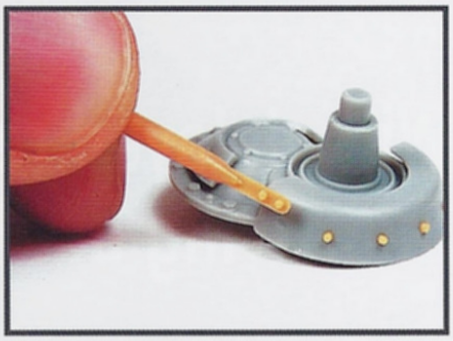


The Turret comes with a separately moulded roof panel and open hatch and visor mouldings.

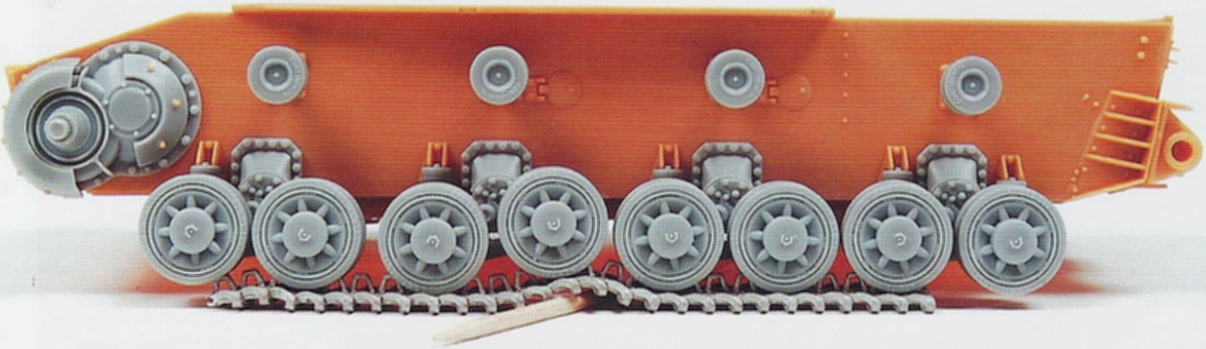




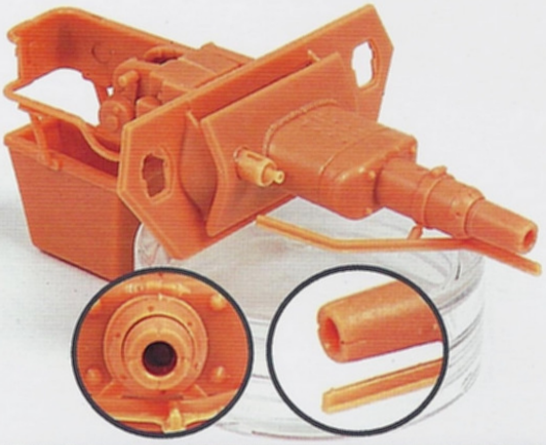
Multipart roadwheels come with individual tires complete with the 'Continental' brand and the suspension bogies have been cleverly designed to allow realistic suspension travel.



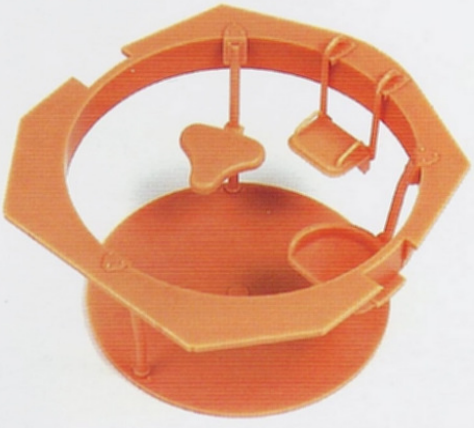
Delicate mouldings are supplied on small stub sprues which can be easily snapped off the main sprue. Here bolt detail for the final drive housings is seen on the stub sprue before it is sliced off and fitted.

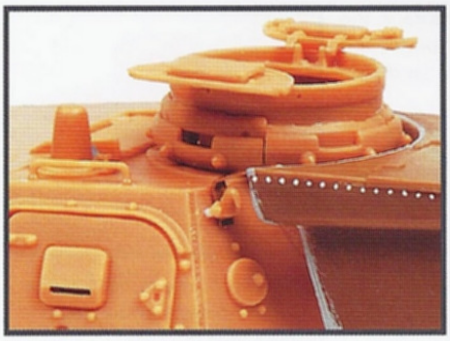


The completed working suspension - because of time restrictions we chose to fit an already assembled set of FRIULMODEL tracks rather than the individual link kit tracks.



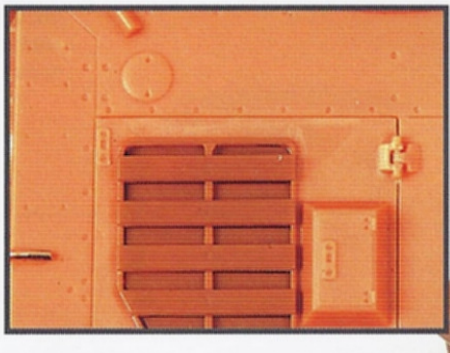
Tristar have included a partial turret interior with gun breech and turret basket. the gun itself is well handled although the muzzle has some very defined grooves for which I can find no reference. Although I left these during construction I returned and filled them in during the painting stage. I also drilled out the gunners sight aperture.





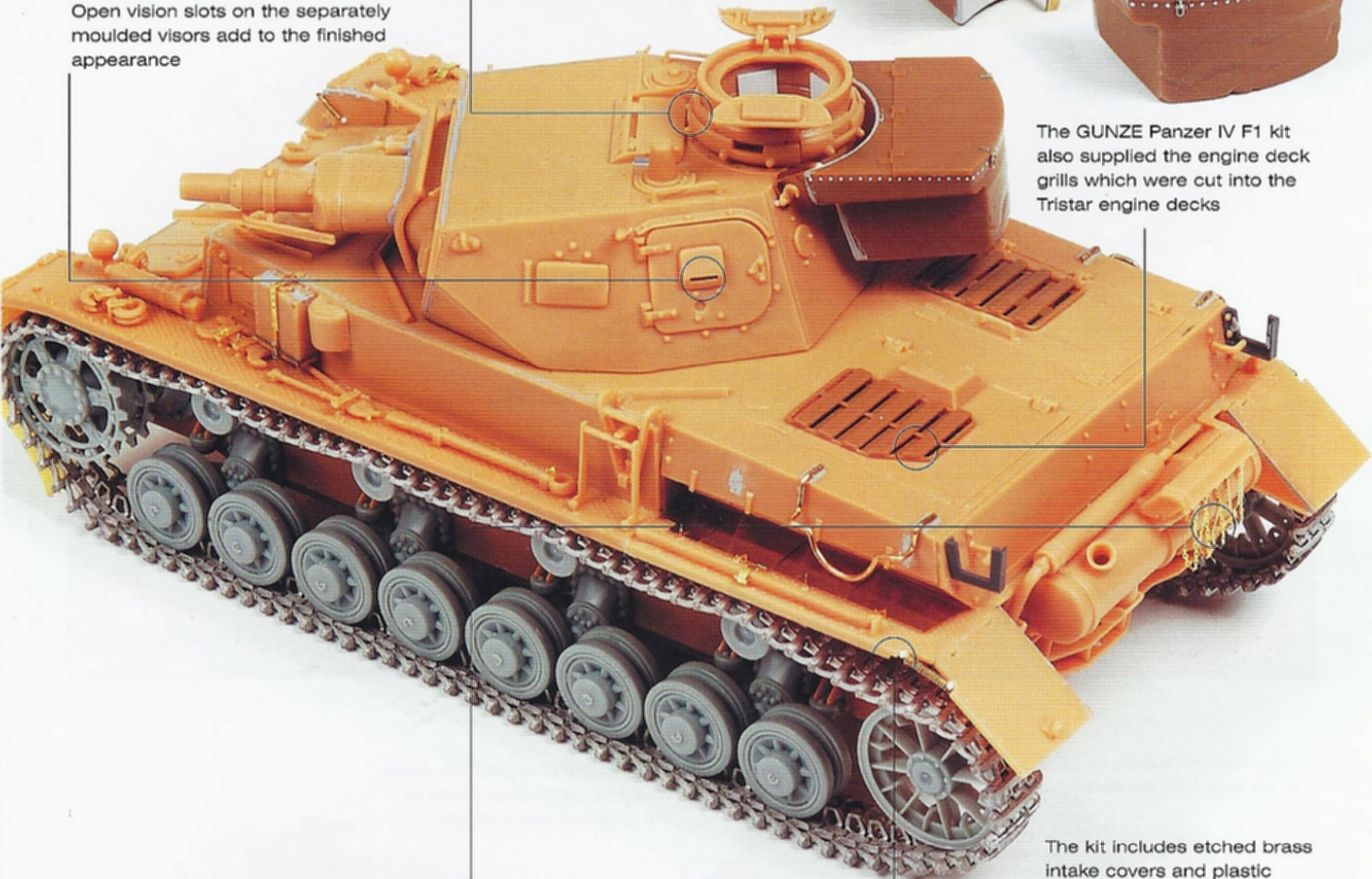
Individual visor sections can be positioned in the open or closed positions.

Open vision slots on the separately moulded visors add to the finished appearance



Recessed screw head detail abounds on the upper surfaces of the kit.

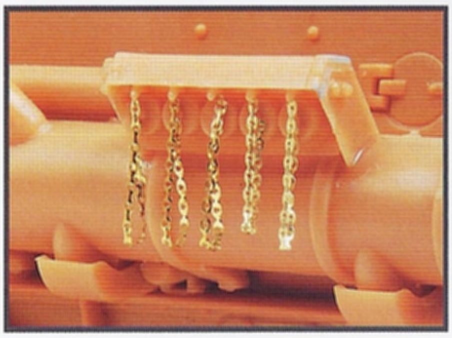
The kit does not supply the turret bin so I took one from the GUNZE PanzerIV F1 kit. The shape of the bin has to be altered to fit the cupola bulge on the turret.



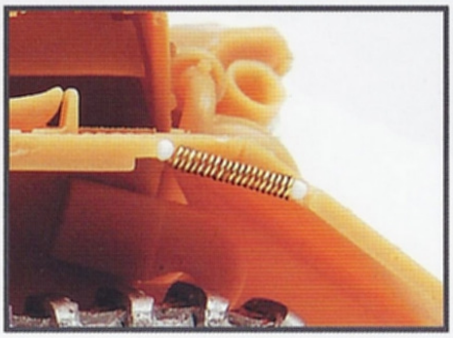
The GUNZE Panzer IV F1 kit also supplied the engine deck grills which were cut into the Tristar engine decks

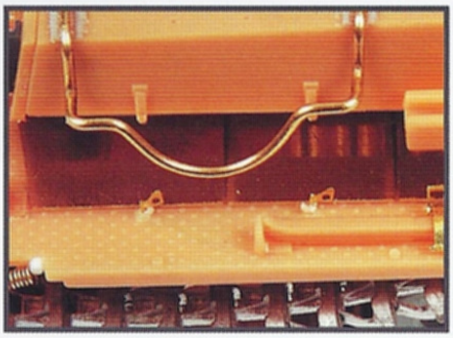
The kit includes etched brass intake covers and plastic fastening catches. I replaced the catches with ABER parts which have more finesse.

The smoke grenade rack was detailed using ABER etched brass chain.



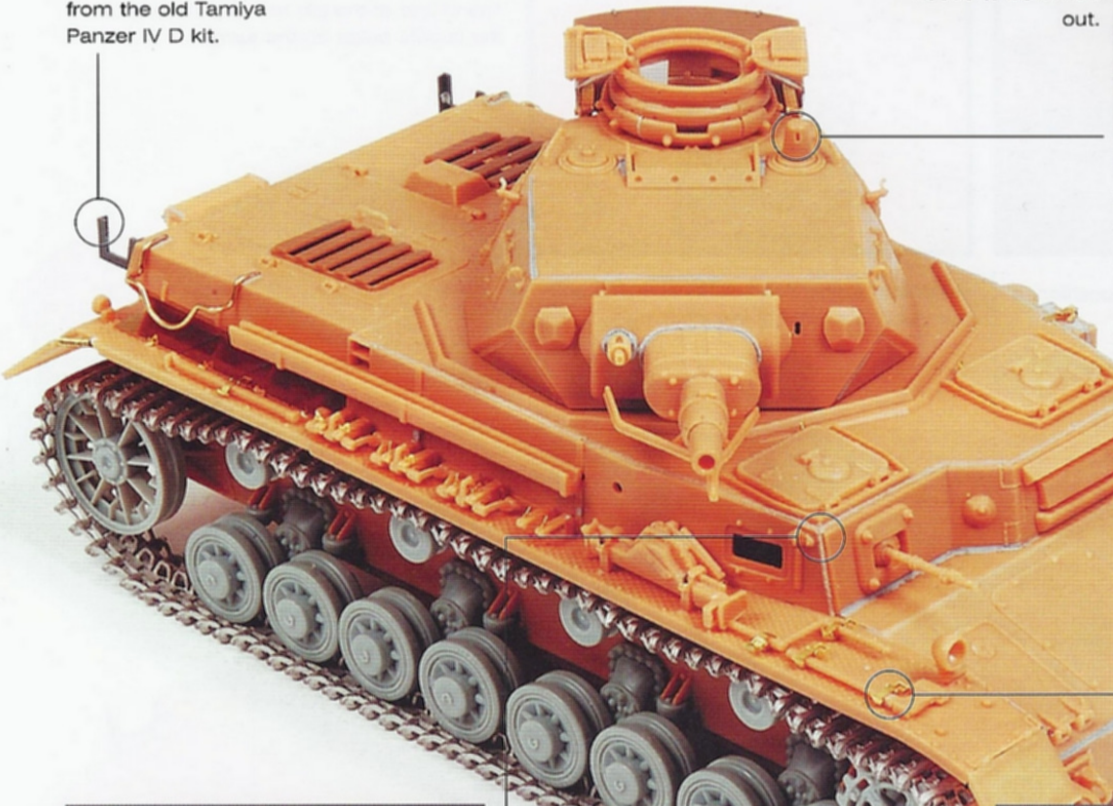
The kit rear mudflap springs were replaced with new ones made from brass wire.



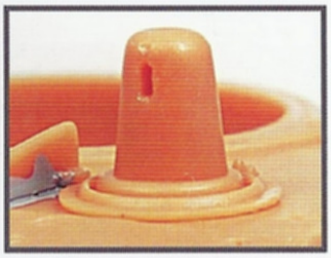


Tristar
Panzer IVD

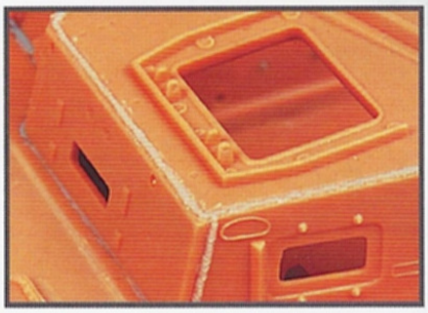
Brackets for the Jerry can rack were taken from the old Tamiya Panzer IV D kit.



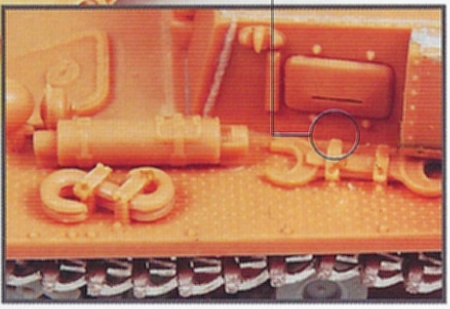
The aperture in the roof top periscope needs to be drilled out.



The kit tools are supplied with moulded clasps and etched brass clasp handles. I chose to replace these with ABER clasps. Individual brackets for the larger tools work well.

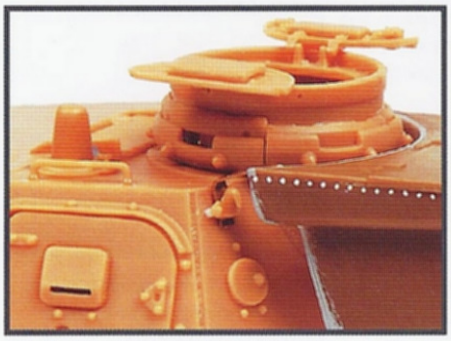


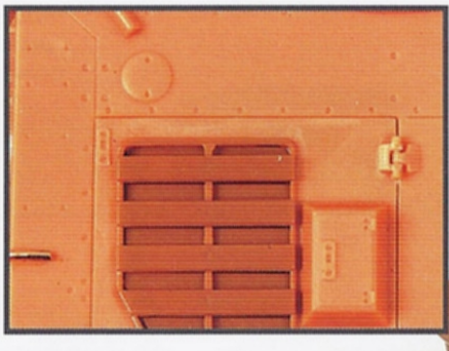
Because the vertical hull armour is supplied as individual panels the weld detail must be added - this was done using the 'Lloyd weld' technique.



A basecoat of GUNZE COLOR panzer grey was applied.

The topcoat of HUMBROL sand was applied to allow areas of the grey to show through.





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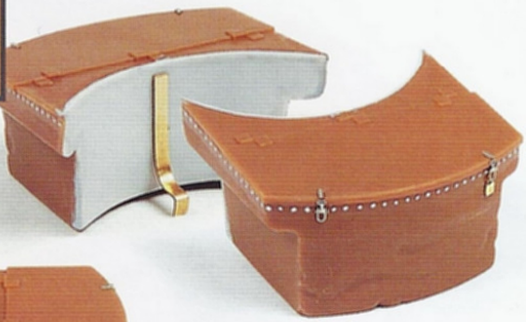

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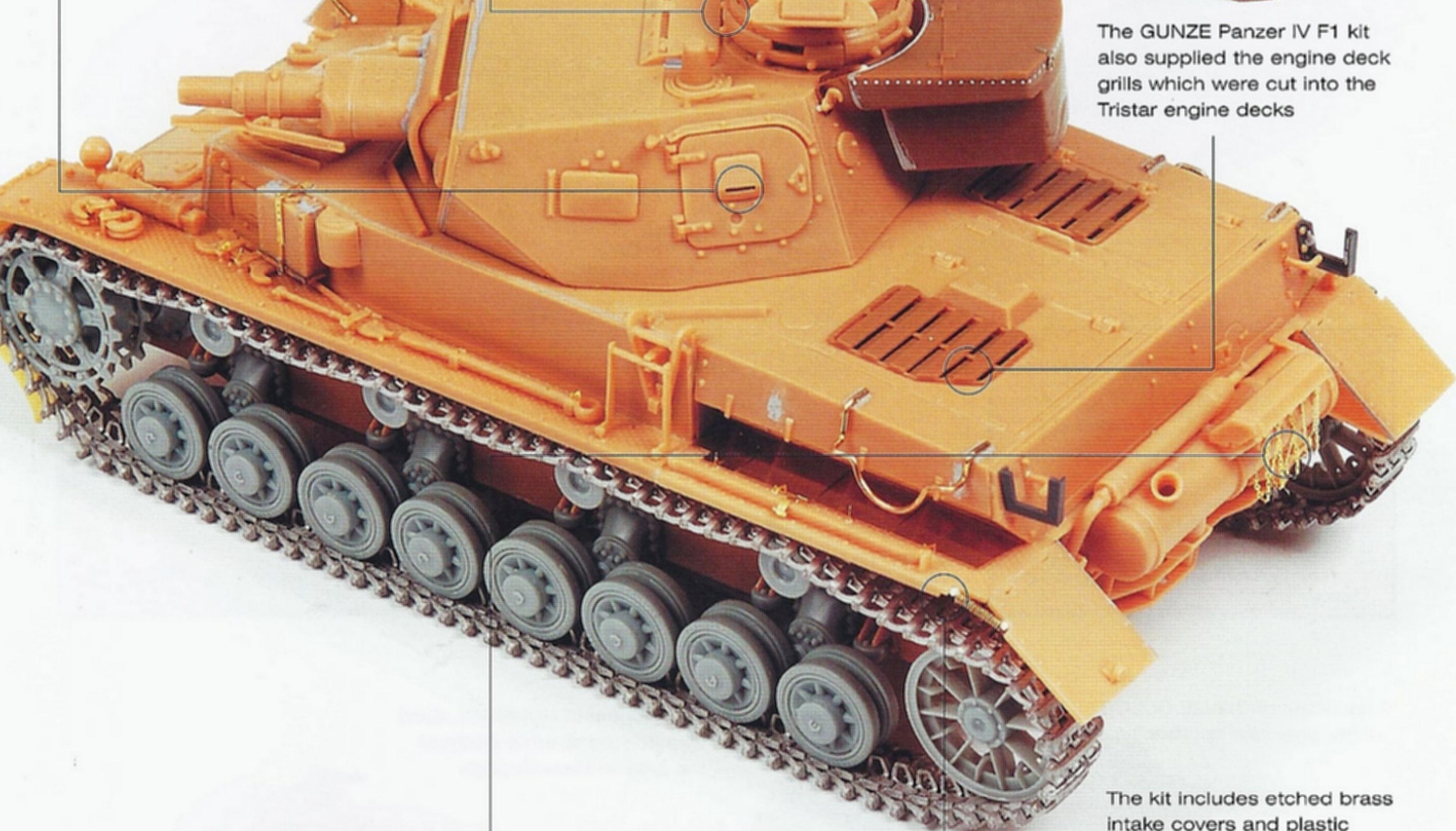

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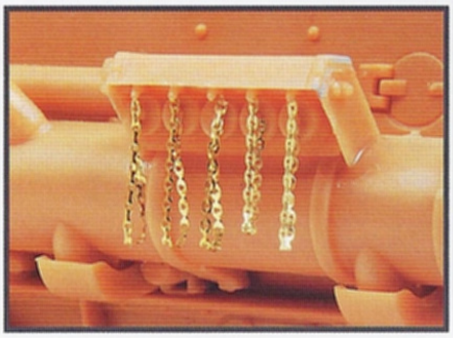
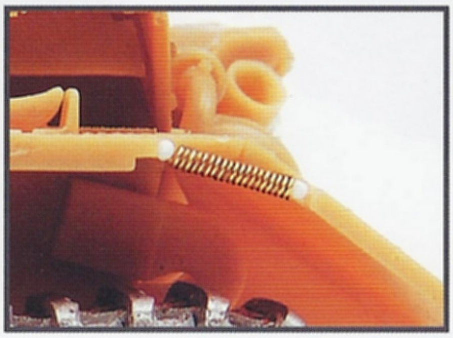
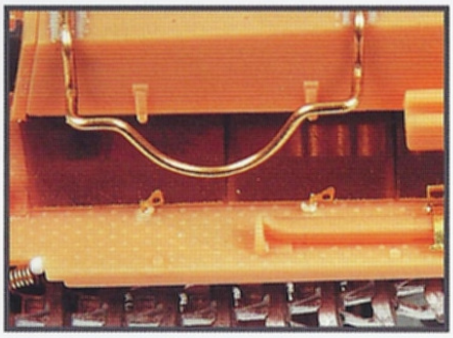
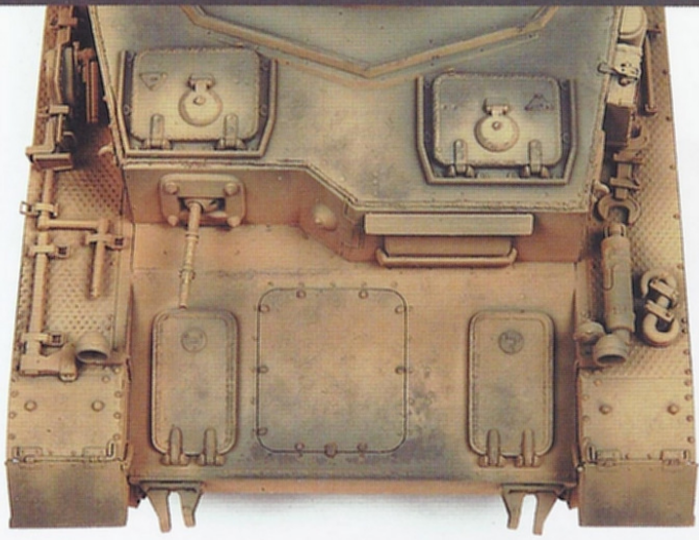
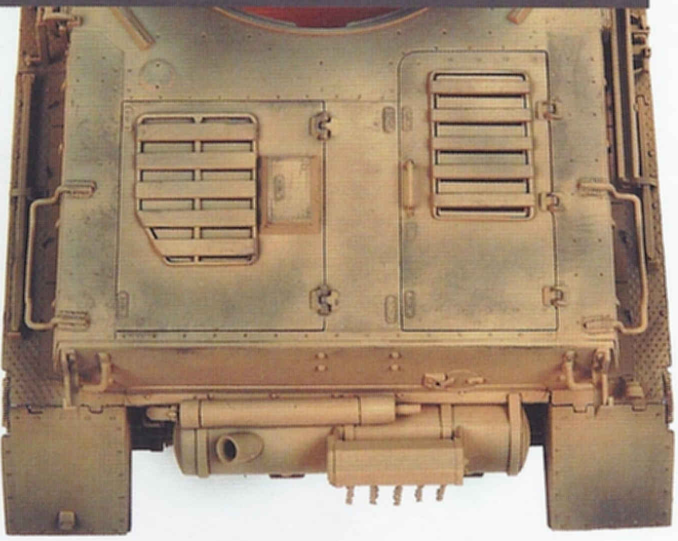


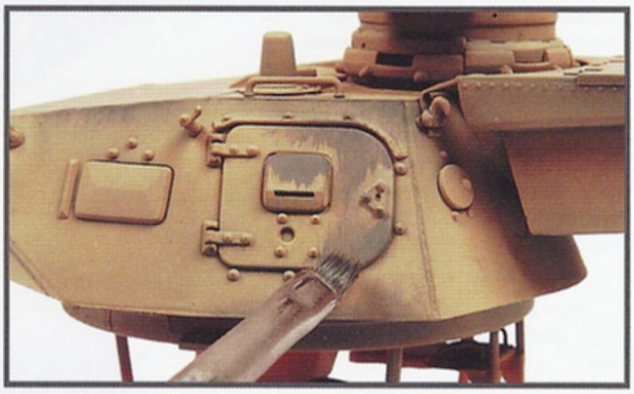


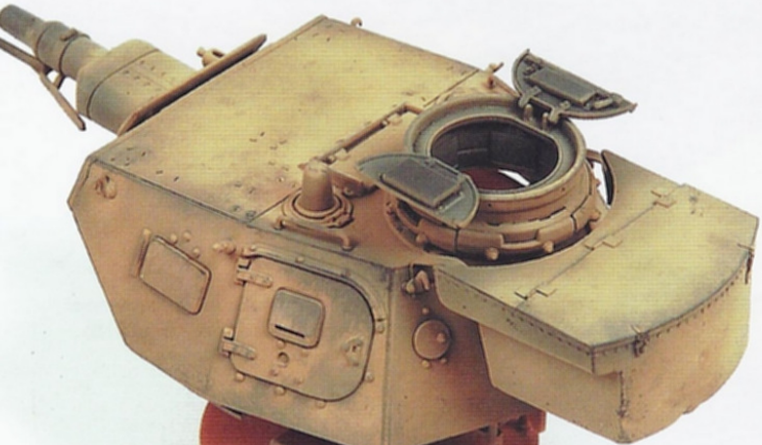




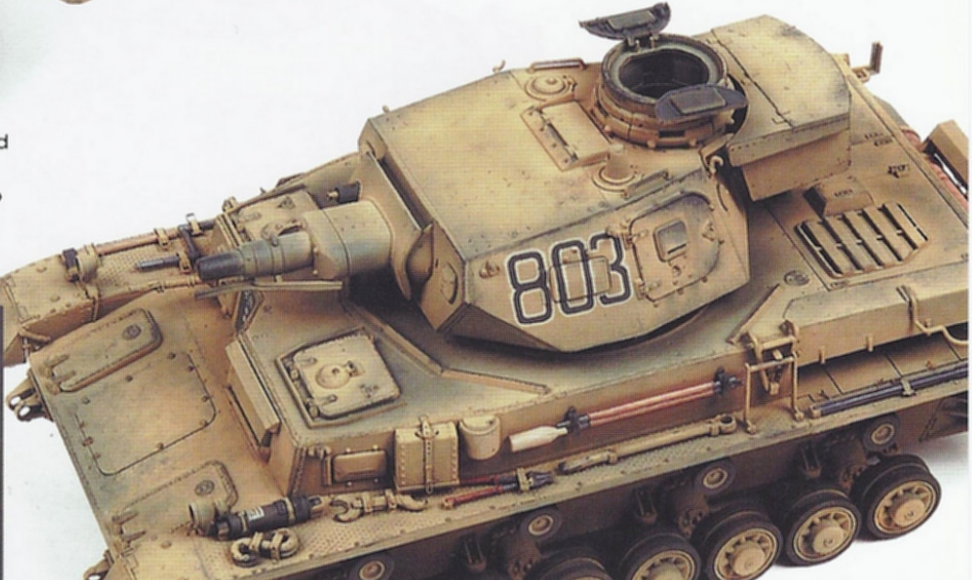


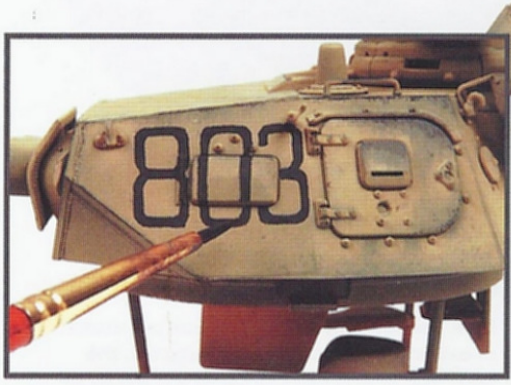
Areas of wear are added using tones of the panzer grey colour drybrushed on. Areas of heavy wear are emphasised with chipped and scuffed effects





The original sand colour enamel is then airbrushed over the areas of wear to knock them back and unify them before re-applying pure panzer grey to areas of extreme wear.

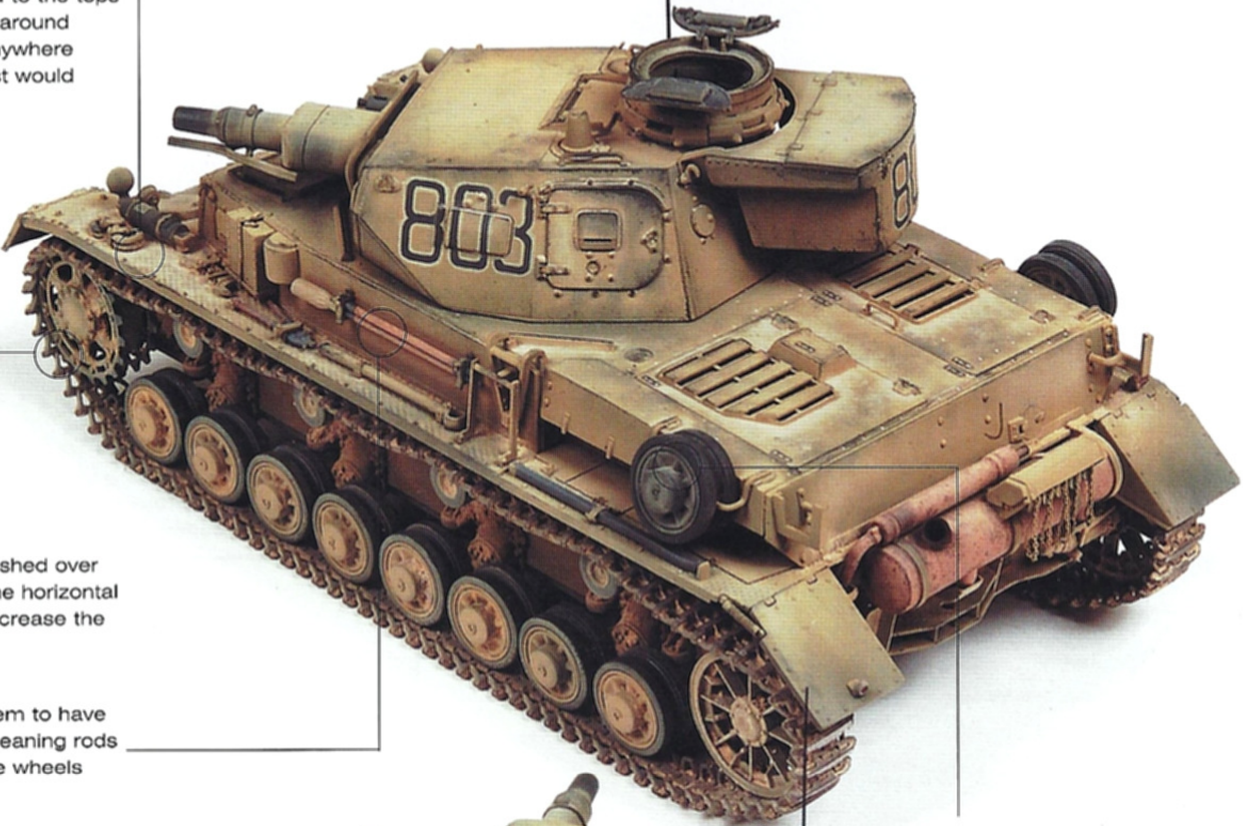




Turret numbers were hand painted in the original panzer grey with white outlines.

Tristar

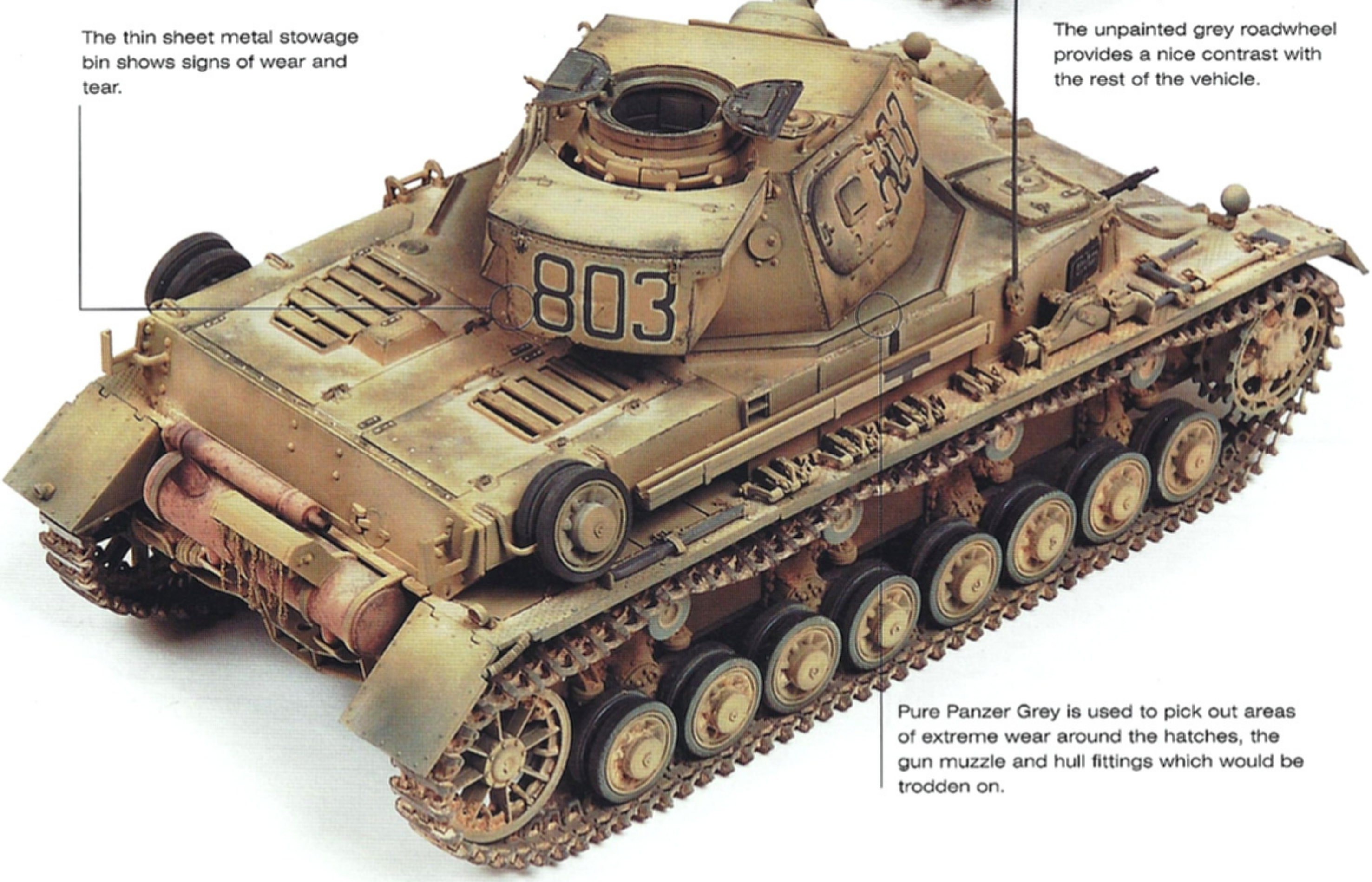
Panzer IVD



Pastels were applied to the tops of the track guards, around hatch covers and anywhere where sand and dust would collect.

Gouache was airbrushed over the lower hull and the horizontal upper surfaces to increase the dusty effect.

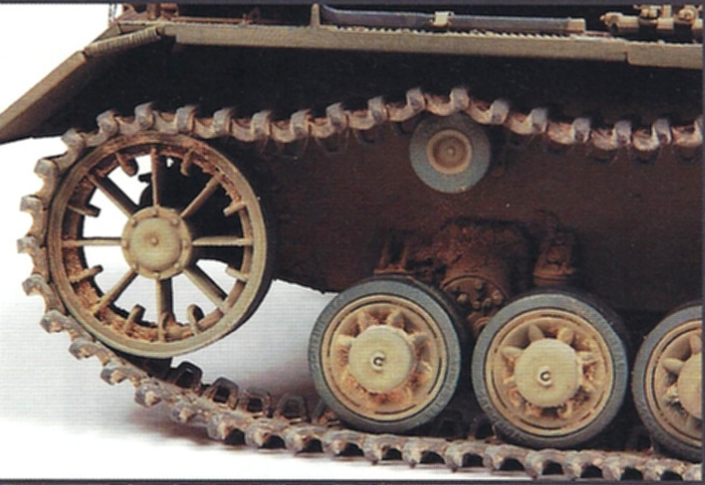
Afrika Korps IV's seem to have relocated the gun cleaning rods here when the spare wheels were fitted.

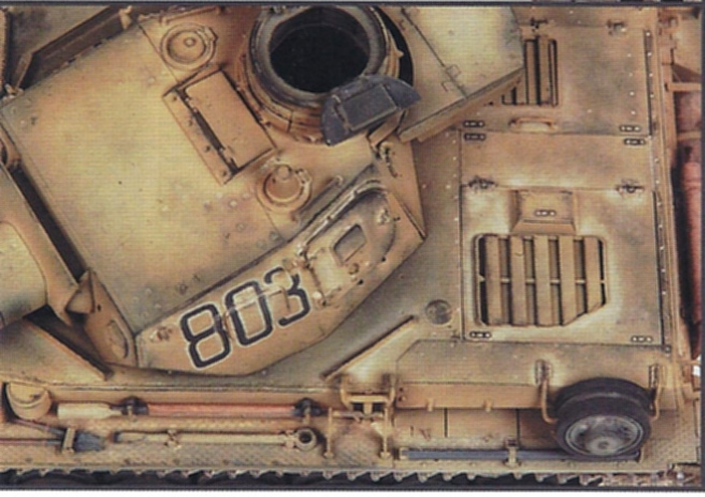


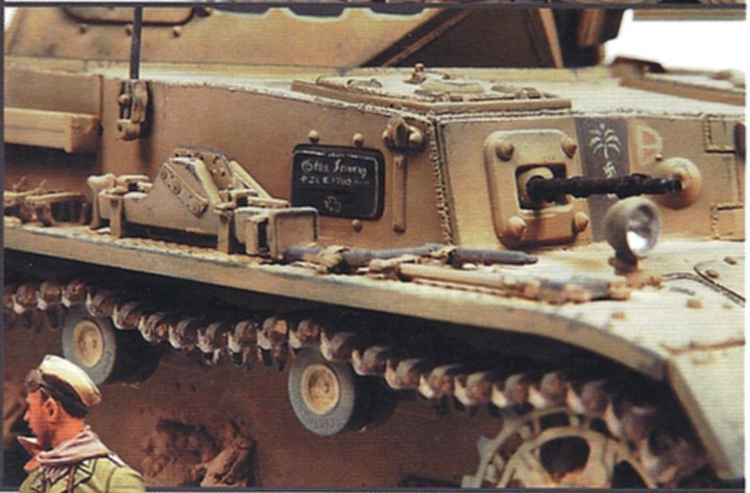
The thin sheet metal stowage bin shows signs of wear and tear.

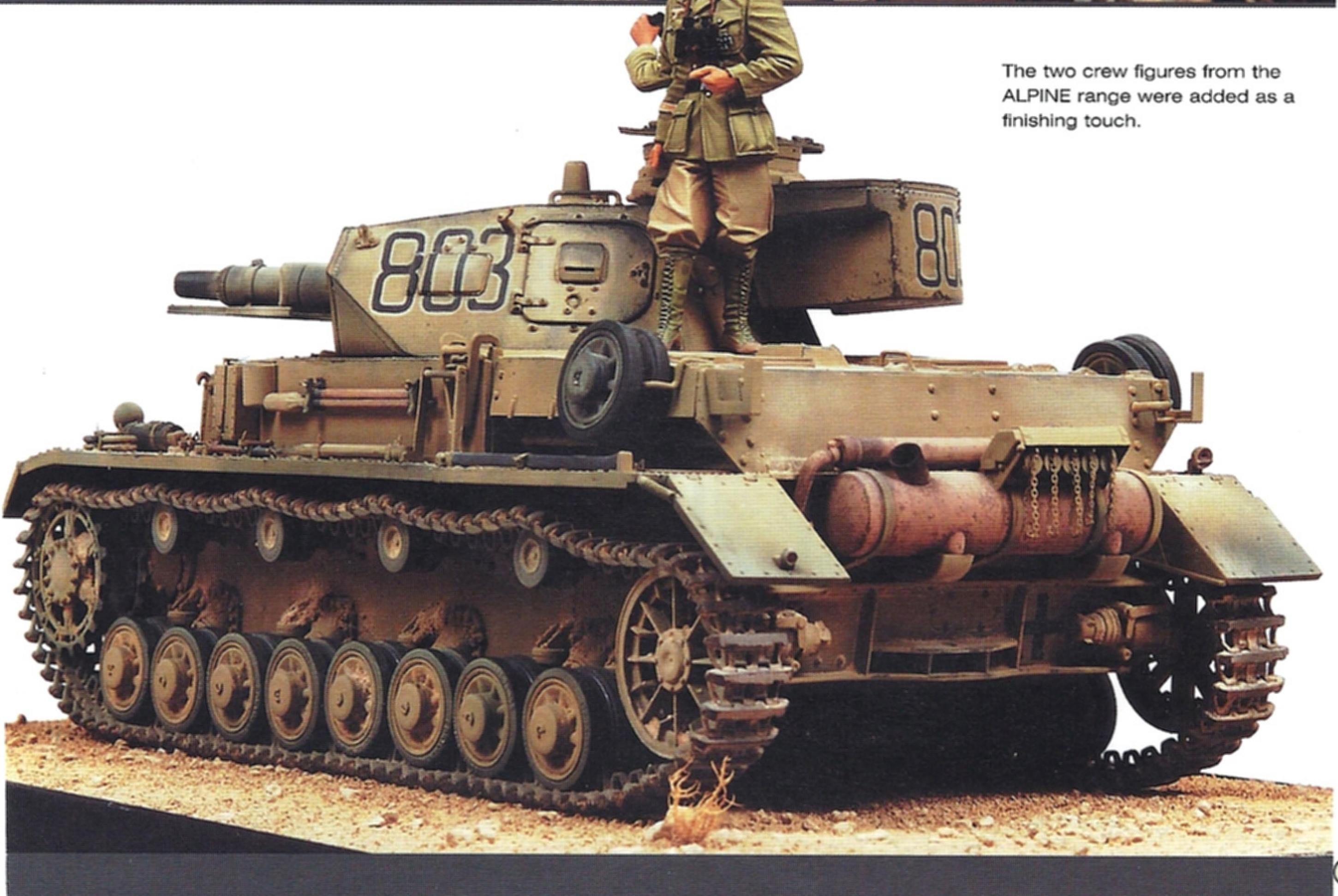
The unpainted grey roadwheel provides a nice contrast with the rest of the vehicle.

Pure Panzer Grey is used to pick out areas of extreme wear around the hatches, the gun muzzle and hull fittings which would be trodden on.



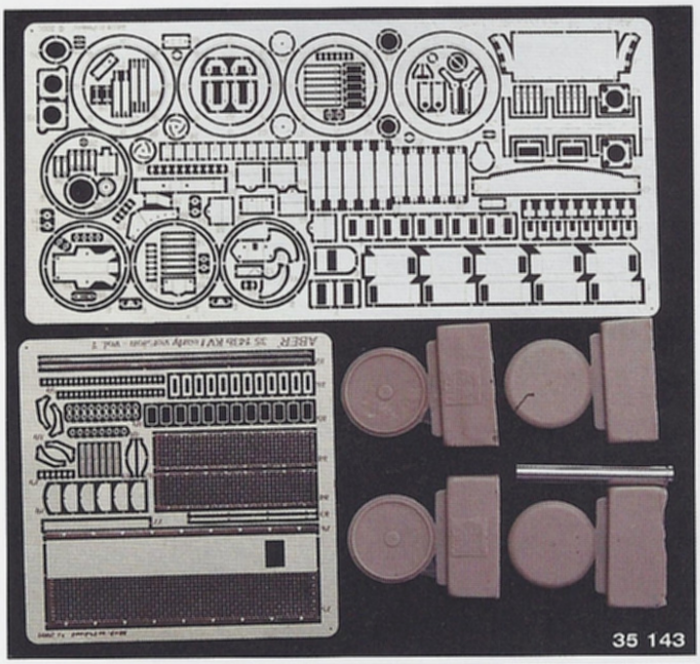


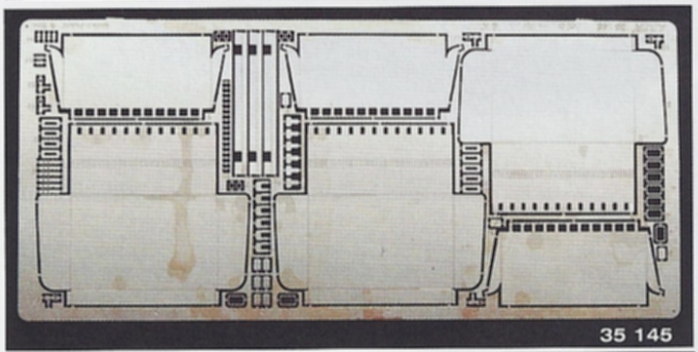




The two crew figures from the ALPINE range were added as a finishing touch.

Keeping Track - new releases


35 143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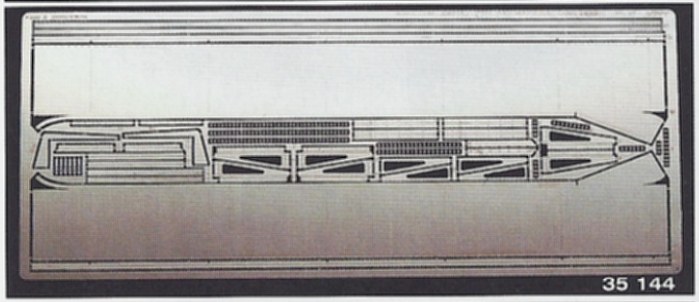
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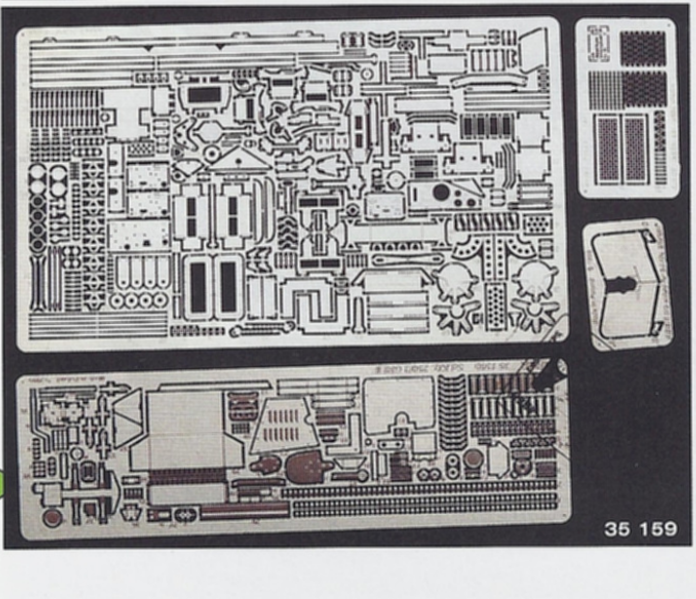
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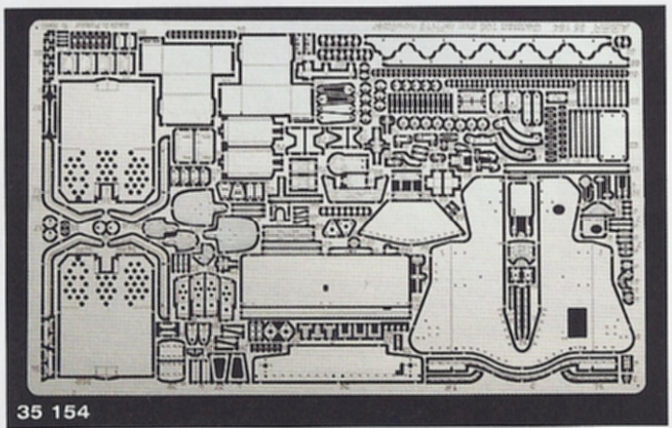
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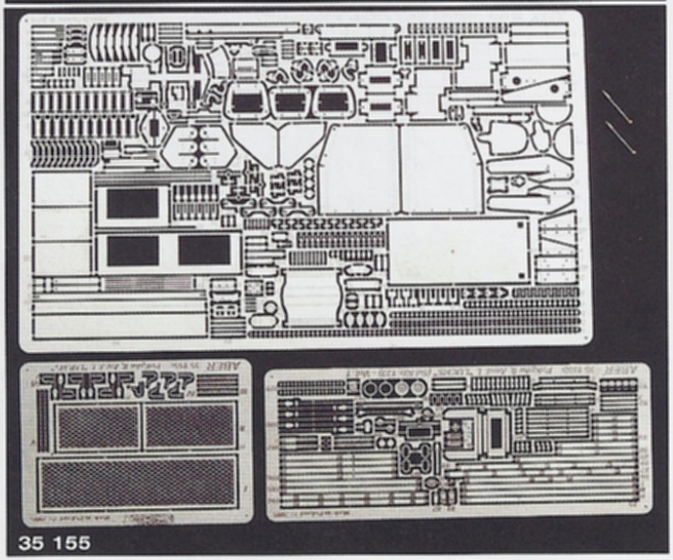
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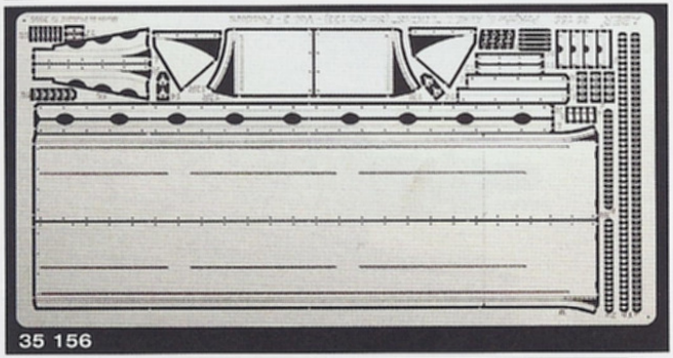
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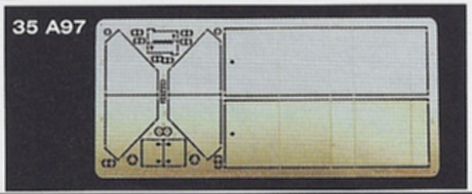
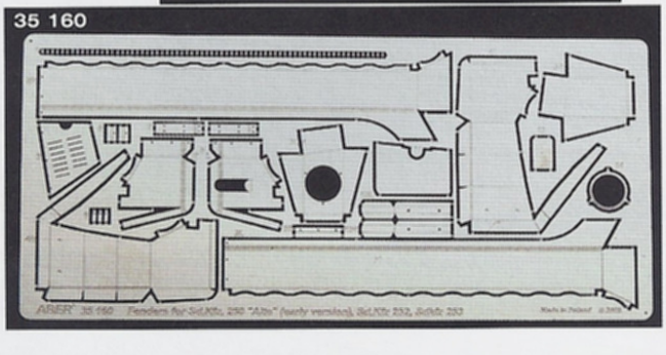

35 A97


35 160

ABER 35 160 Fenders for Sd.Kfz. 250 "Alte" (early version), Sd.Kfz 252, Sd.Kfz 253

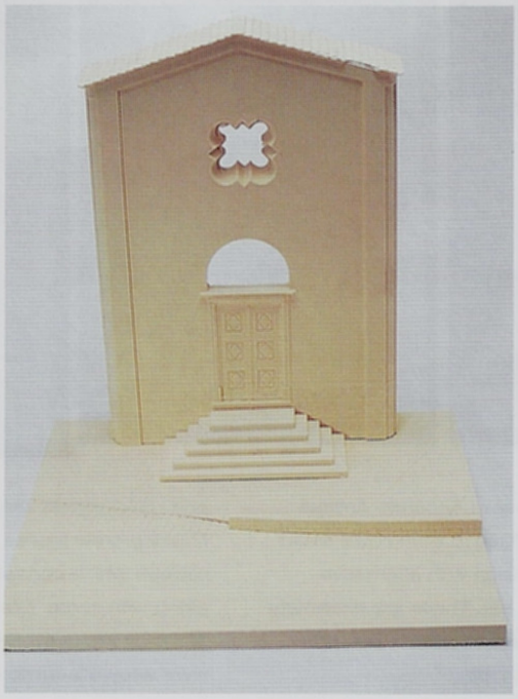
ABER

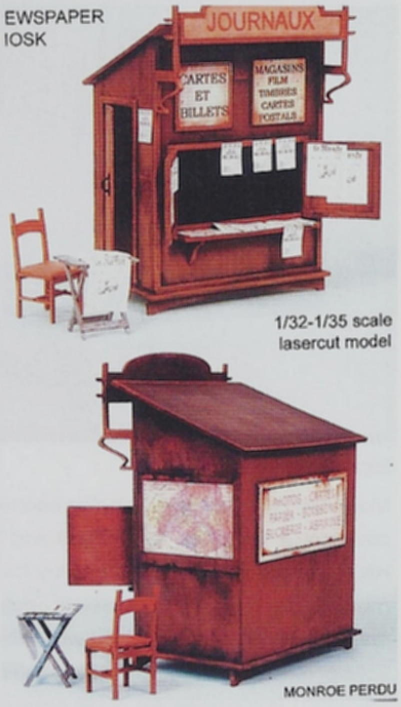
Part 2 of Aber's latest releases covers a selection of vehicle update sets beginning with volume 1 for the KV1 35 143. This set includes a set of four resin replacement hatch covers and a turned aluminium stowage container as well as 2 etched frets. These include parts to make periscopes and locking mechanisms for the hatches as well as a new turret machine gun mount. There are replacement engine deck grills and mesh covers and details for the stowage bins and tool stowage making this a good basic set to update the old Tamiya kits. Volume 2 of the KV set 35 144 ia a set of replacement fenders for the KVIor II and Volume 3 35 145 are replacement stowage bins with hinged lids.

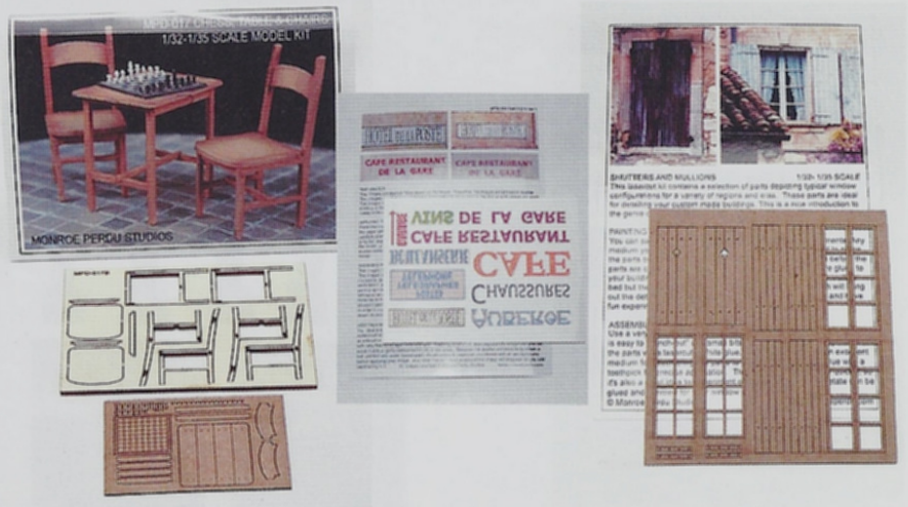
Next we have 2 sets to update the Tasca Luchs Volume 1 35 155 is very comprehensive with functional visors, replacement tool stowage, new stowage bin lids, turned brass width indicators, new rear mud flaps, replacement engine intake ribs and screens, jerrycan racks, turret hatch details and crew insignia and headphones. The only thing missing is new trackguards and these are covered in Volume 2 35 156. 35 154 is an update set for the AFV Club LeFH18 10.5cm Howitzer. This set includes replacement baseplates for the recoil spades, new tool stowage brackets, replacement gun shields, details for the wheel hubs and braking mechanism. This set contains some really small assemblies even by Abers standards.

Two sets now for the SdKfz 250/3 with Volume 1 35 159 containing details for the driver's compartment, replacement facias for the radio racks with graphics film, replacement tool stowage clamps, replacement dashboard, jerrycan racks,rifle racks, visors and latch mechanism for the rear door as well as the MG shield and mesh for the engine deck intakes. The second set 35 160 is a set of generic replacement mudgurads for the 250 Alte family.

Finally set 35 A97 is a set of the 'square' ish pattern fuel tanks for the T34 complete with mounting brackets and ideal for achieving that battered look.



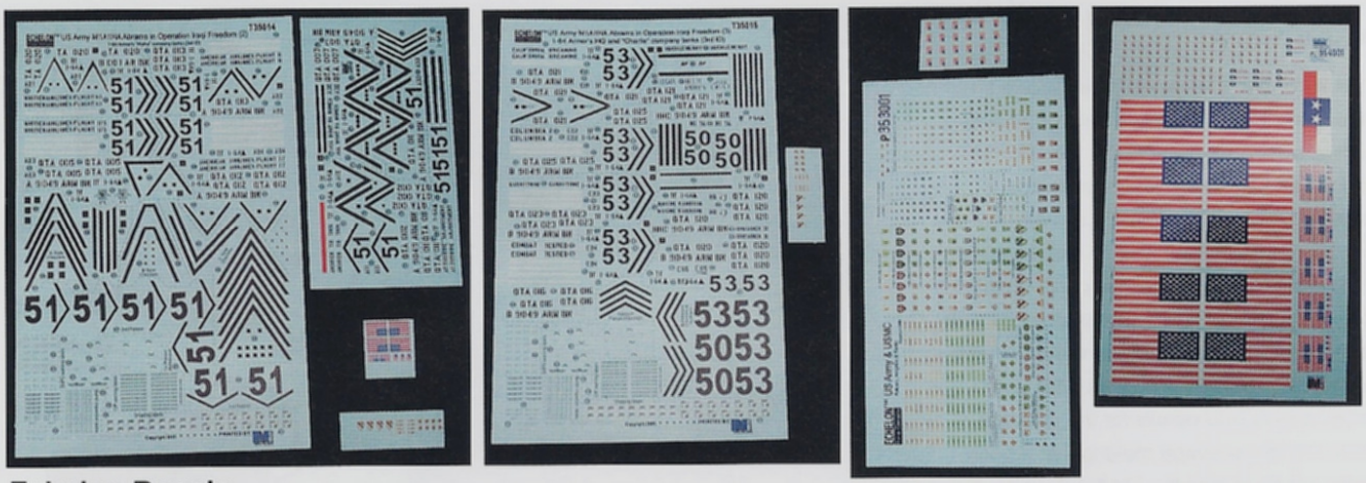




Monroe Perdu Studios

Something for the Diorama builders now with some exciting new releases from Munroe Purdu. Beginning with the biggest in the shape of an Italian church frontage with roadway. This is an impressive piece of resin and very nicely finished. It comes with a preprinted fresco insert for those of us not up to doing their own Michaelangelo impression and a printed window insert. The roadway or plaza in front of the building has an interesting change of levels and is big enough to take quite a substantial vehicle. The kit comes with photos of the actual building to assist you in getting a realistic paint finish. Monroe Perdu have specialised in the design of Laser Cut kits made from card and board. MPD-032 is a complete French Newspaper kiosk complete with pre printed signage, stock and table and chair. MPD -017 is a table and chair set complete with miniature chess set which has endless diorama potential. Also in laser cut card is a usefull set of shutters and window frames which will save an awful lot of time and finally MPD-033 a set of French Wall sign decals with instructions on applying them and how to achieve a realistic worn appearance. Recommended.

Keeping Track - new releases



Echelon Decals

More new releases from Echelon courtesy of Accurate Armour covering OIF subjects. Set T35014 and T35015 both cover M1A1 HA Abrams from the US 3rd Infantry Division with alternative markings for 7 different vehicles in each set. These are extremely comprehensive and supported with reference photos printed in Echelon's 4 page full colour instruction sheets.

Set 35301 is a smaller set of US Army and USMC uniform patches and rank insignia which should take away some of the stress of finishing crew figures. Set 354001 is a set of US antenna flags and stickers which consists mostly assorted sized stars and stripes along with some 'Don't mess with Texas' stickers.

Echelon are available from Accurate Armour Tel 01475 743955 or www.accurate-armour.com

ARMOURY PHOTO PROJECT 006
K5E 28 cm RAILWAY GUN
Alan Ranger & Carl Dennis

K5E 28cm Railway Gun
By Alan Ranger & Carl Dennis

Published by Armoury photo project

Anyone planning to go to town on one of the available Leopold rail gun kits is going to need a copy of this book as a one stop reference to this weapon. The book offers a comprehensive full colour photo reference of one of the two remaining guns from end to end with a key to each area being covered and simple captions. It is an effective no nonsense approach which works well and provides the key information necessary for anyone wanting to detail the kits.

Recommended

Hornet and Wolf

2 new headsets from Hornet - HBH11 is a 4 head set wearing modern UK tank helmets, somplete with mics and a samll jig to make the booms for them. HGH18 is a set of 5 heads wearing WW2 German Army sidecaps. Both are of the usual impeccably high Hornet standard.

New figures from Wolf are WSH40, a British Officer in the Western Desert wearing a dufflecoat and WAW49, a late WW2 British/Canadian Infantryman standing casually having a smoke.

Calibre 72
A division of Pentagon Group Ltd.
SCALE 1/72
www.calibre35.cz
STRV 103C
SWEDISH MBT
FULL RESIN KIT W/PHOTOETCHED PARTS
72 005

Calibre 72

The Swedish STRV 103C is Calibre 72's first full kit in 1:72 and it really is a little gem. Cast is a cream coloured resin the main hull is remarkably detailed and complete with the modeller required to add the running gear with link and length tracks and fit the gun along with some of the more delicate fittings. The casting quality is top notch as you would expect and the kit includes a small etched fret. Some modellers may be disappointed that the hatches are moulded on in the closed position and the suspension is fixed in the horizontal however the design of the kit means you could adapt this if you wish.

Along with the STRV there is a handy load set for the back of the DUKW and possibly the best ever set of US tank crew in this scale with the same detail as in 1:35th and some really natural poses - superb.

StuG IV Late
MAUS HEAVY TANK
1:72
DRAGON

NEW TOOLING
M1 PANTHER II
MINE DETECTION AND CLEARING VEHICLE
1:35 MODERN AFV SERIES
DRAGON

Dragon

We start this batch of new releases from Dragon with some small scale subjects beginning with the Stug IV in 1:72nd. It seems that Dragon continue to push their own boundaries and this Stug is quite something. The moulding quality is incredible and it really is a scaled down 1:35th kit. Where tools were previously moulded on the vehicle here they are supplied as separate items. The muzzle brake is moulded hollow and the roadwheels are cleverly moulded with separate hubs. The Maus is handled in a similar manner with quality moulding and it comes with the dummy test turret as well as the armed 'production turret'. There is a small etched fret with engine deck grills and a ladder and decals include the fake Russian markings used on the trial vehicles making this a very complete kit.

The Leopard 2A4 is even better again with incredible levels of detail which would shame most 1:35th kits. The tracks are supplied already painted which sounds naff but isn't and the upper hull moulding is just breathtaking!

In 1:35th we have an M1 Panther II mine clearance vehicle. This features a great hull moulding with subtly textured anti-slip panels and correct pattern engine deck grills and separate inspection hatches. The mine roller assembly is a complex kit in itself and is designed to be raised or lowered. the kit includes single link 'Magic Track' along with an etched fret, assorted chain and baided metal cable.

The new Dragon Flak 36 continues the higher standards of kit design seen on the initial model Tiger I. The level of finesse on the fine detail areas like the dials is second to none and the fresh approach to moulding the tread patterns on the tires is a winner. There appear to be none of the shortcuts in the design of the model that normally compromise accuracy - Dragon have gone the long way around and are to be applauded for that. The inclusion of a gun crew is also most welcome for this would surely have been sold separately at one time. Looking at the finely moulded parts, the additional turned aluminium barrels, etched frets and Ron Volstad's stunning box art I just cannot find anything to fault.

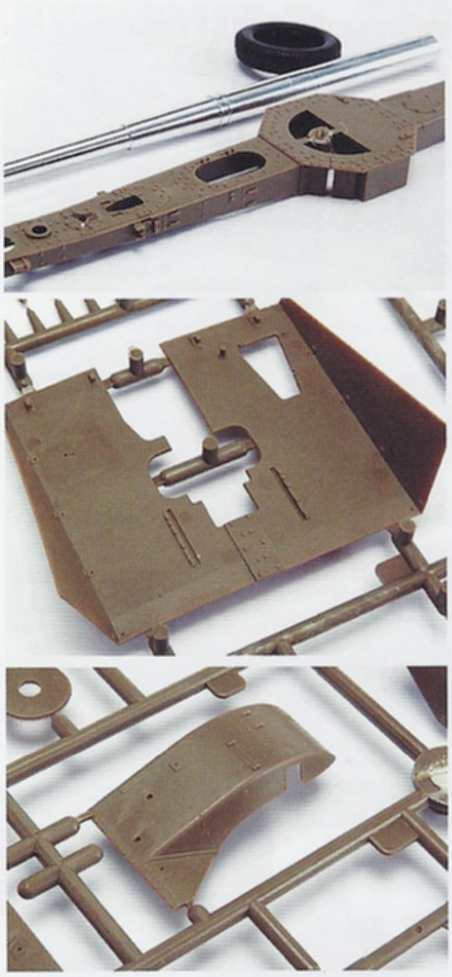
88mm FLAK 36 w/FLAK ARTILLERY CREW
DRAGON

014
German Pz.IV Wheel Set
Tristar

Tristar

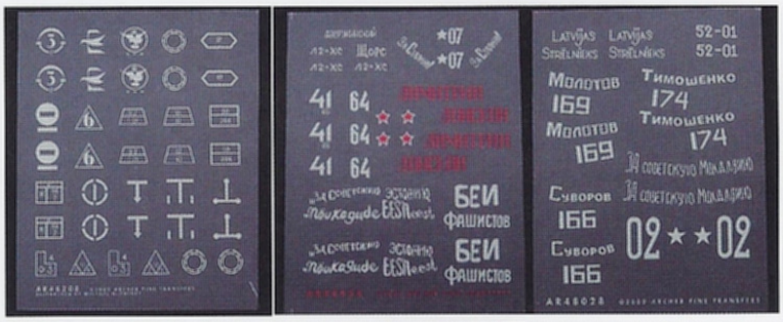
As part of our look at the Panzer IV kit we covered the stunning new suspension components which are now available indepentently of the full tank kit. This set includes bogies, roadwheels, hubs, dampers, and return rollers for all Panzer IV variants along with the final drives from the 'D' kit. Obviously this presents the opportunity to upgrade the suspension from other Panzer IV kits with what is now THE state of the art suspension.

Keeping Track - new releases

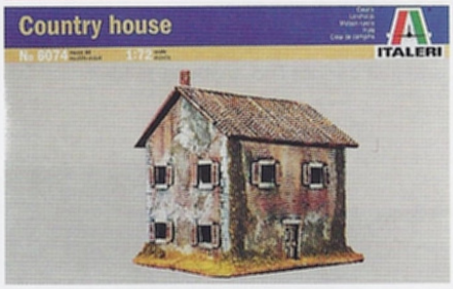


AFV Club

AFV Club have sent some test shots of their forthcoming 88mm Flak 18 which looks to be extremely impressive. This kit depicts the early version of the gun with circular outrigger feet and flared mudguards on the trailer wheels. The kit includes a turned aluminium barrel and rubber tires and some impressive slide moulding on the cruciform mount. AFV Club have developed a reputation for designing some very high quality artillery kits and this latest release looks like it will certainly enhance this and in terms of moulding quality and fine detail there is little to choose between this and the Dragon version. As this is a test shot we are not certain exactly what will be included in the kit but what we have seen so far looks to be very exciting.



Morris Quad tractor with 25 PDR. gun
No 7027
1:72
7 Figures included
ITALERI
ALZ ZERO



Italeri

Two new small scale releases from Italeri beginning with a Quad guntractor and 25pdr combo. the Quad is quite nicely handled with the exception of some horribly overscale treadplate on the chassis moulding which would be best removed. The gun and limber are very sharp with a nicely detailed gun shield and they come with a 6 man crew and mrkings for vehicles in North Africa, italy and France.

The Country house is aimed at the wargames market and is comprised of flat panels to assemble. It is quite simple but may appeal to small scale diorama builders.

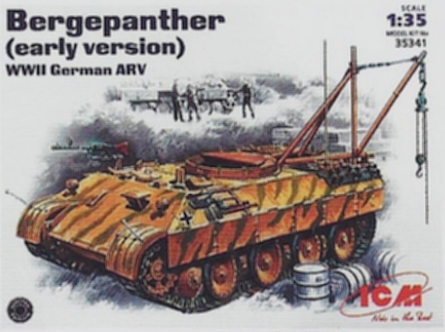
Archer Fine Transfers

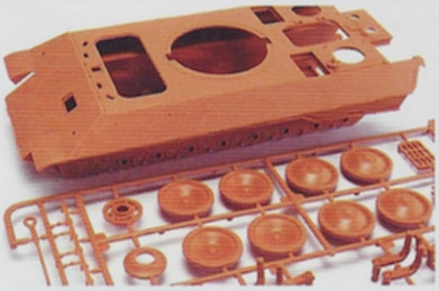
Archer have moved to cover the renewed interest in 1:48th scale with these latest releases which cover WWII Russian subjects with a mix of generic divisional markings and specific vehicle markings, in this case T34/76 and T34/85. As usual print quality is spot on and the sets include colour positioning guides where appropriate.

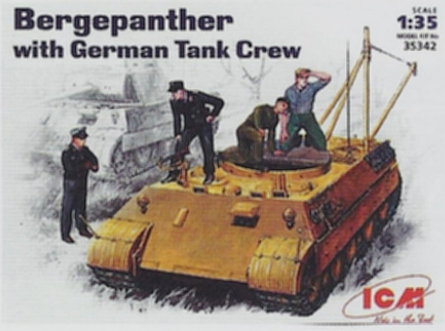
Tank Power vol. XI
226
PzKpfw I
vol. I
English text
Wydawnictwo Militaria

Tank Power No.3
PzKpfw 1 Vol.1by Janusz Ledwoch
Published by Wydawnictwo Militaria

Many modellers will already be very familiar with this series and this latest release covers the development of the Panzer 1 beginning with the Ausf A, covering the Ausf F, C and B with colour profiles of the A, B along with variants like the command versions. There are colour photos of preserved museum examples and 1:35th scale drawings making this a useful modelling guide. The text is in both Polish and English. Our sample was supplied by Pol Models: 020 8992 3822 or email Polmodels@AOL.com







ICM

Two versions of the same kit here from ICM the difference being that one version includes a set of crew figures. Choosing the Panther as a subject is quite risky and the choice of subject is a liitle unusual being an early version Bergpanther. This lacks the winch and rear spade having instead a boarded over turret ring. ICM have made quite a good job of the Panther hull and the separate torsion bars give it an advantage over the Dragon kits for example. It lacks some finesse around the engine deck grills and the roadwheels are quite poor lacking the double rim and being too angular. There is no interior detail but the front drivers plate is moulded separately which would aid anyone wanting to build the later version and there are some really nicely handled areas in the kit. Tracks a individual link with solid teeth and the crew figures are certainly worth considering.

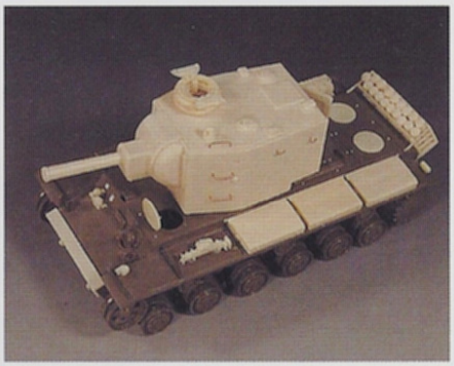
TRACKSTORY
LES CHARS B
B1-B1bis-B1ter
N°3

Trackstory No.3
The Char B by Pascal Danjou
Published by Editions du Barbotin

This is the third book in this excellent series which deals with one of my favourite vehicles, the Char B. The format is the same as the previous 2 books with dual English and French text, a host of good photos covering the development and variants of the tank and its use by the Germans after the fall of France. It concludes with some excellent plans, colour profiles with examples of the different factory applied camouflage patterns and the various unit marking systems which are extremely useful. This is another useful and cost effective reference for anyone interested in French or german armour - highly recommended Our sample was supplied by Pol Models: 020 8992 3822 or email Polmodels@AOL.com

MINIARM

Miniarm are a new manufacturer to us based in Russia with some very exciting products which include some excellent individual link resin track sets for the KV family and also modern MBT's like the T64 and T72. They also have a range of replacement wheels and turrets for the T34 and T64 and JSII. The quality looks very good turned aluminium barrels in the turret kits and even a breach block in the T64 turret. Available from AFV Modeller.



MIG Productions

New from Mig Productions is a tasty conversion set for the Tamiya KVII kit to convert it to the German KVII 754r which includes a complete new turret with a fully detailed cupola, new stowage bins and rear ammunition rack. As always with MIG the quality is good with attractive texture on the turret but the rear rack is supplied on a backing sheet which must be sanded off which will not be easy. There is another version of the Landcruiser kit this is a long cargo version mounting a Soviet B-11 Recoilless Gun which is quite a mean looking combination. Next are 2 sets of Panther D stowage boxes - these are the ones mounted over the engine deck intakes on some command versions and there are early type and production types complete with raised mounting plates. There is an addition to the pigments range with P231 which is a metallic Gun Metal finish. There are also 3 new dry transfer sets - Allied stars, WWII US Vehicle Registration numbers and Soviet T34 and KV markings and slogans.

MATILDA II

T
6781
GRAMPUS

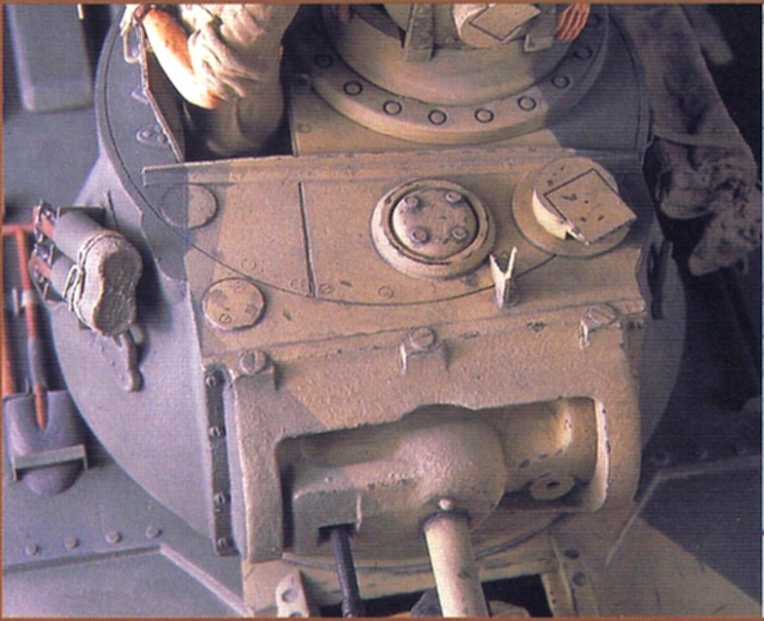
By Reidar Morten Syvertsen

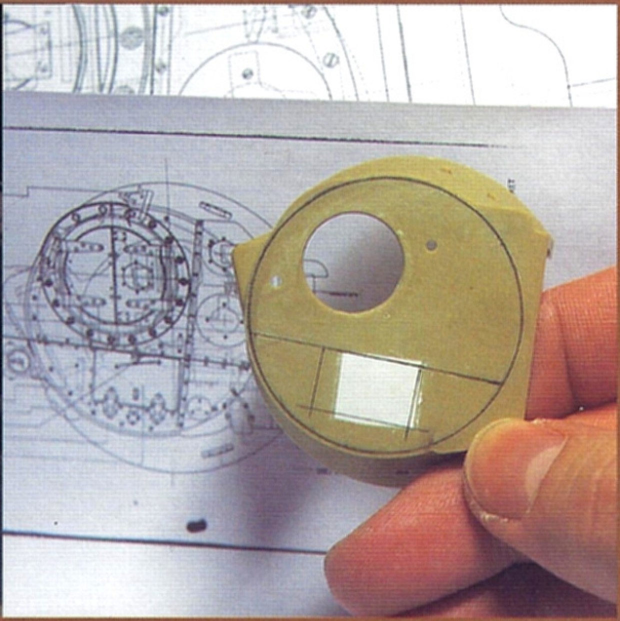
GRAMPUS
T
6781

The Matilda's looks will be well known to most modellers, ugly but still handsome in a quirky way, like so many other British designs of that era. Much has already been written about the Matilda, most of it derogatory-or so it seems. Then why was it affectionately known as "Queen of the battlefield" and "Queen of the desert"?

Well, simply put: At the time of it's introduction no one could touch it! It carried what was probably the best anti-tank gun in the world, and its armour was all but impervious to any of the opposing tank guns. It also had the distinction of staying in front line service throughout World War II, the Aussies preferring it over any alternative right up until the end of hostilities in the far east. This provides the modeller with a lot of versions and colour schemes to choose from.

For my own part, there was no contest – my first Matilda just had to be an early desert vehicle in the classic three coloured "Caunter" scheme. In 1/35 scale the modeller has but one kit to choose from, the Tamiya offering dating back to the early Seventies. Just like the Matilda itself, this kit too has been on the receiving end of many a derogatory comment in later years, however by applying some basic modelling





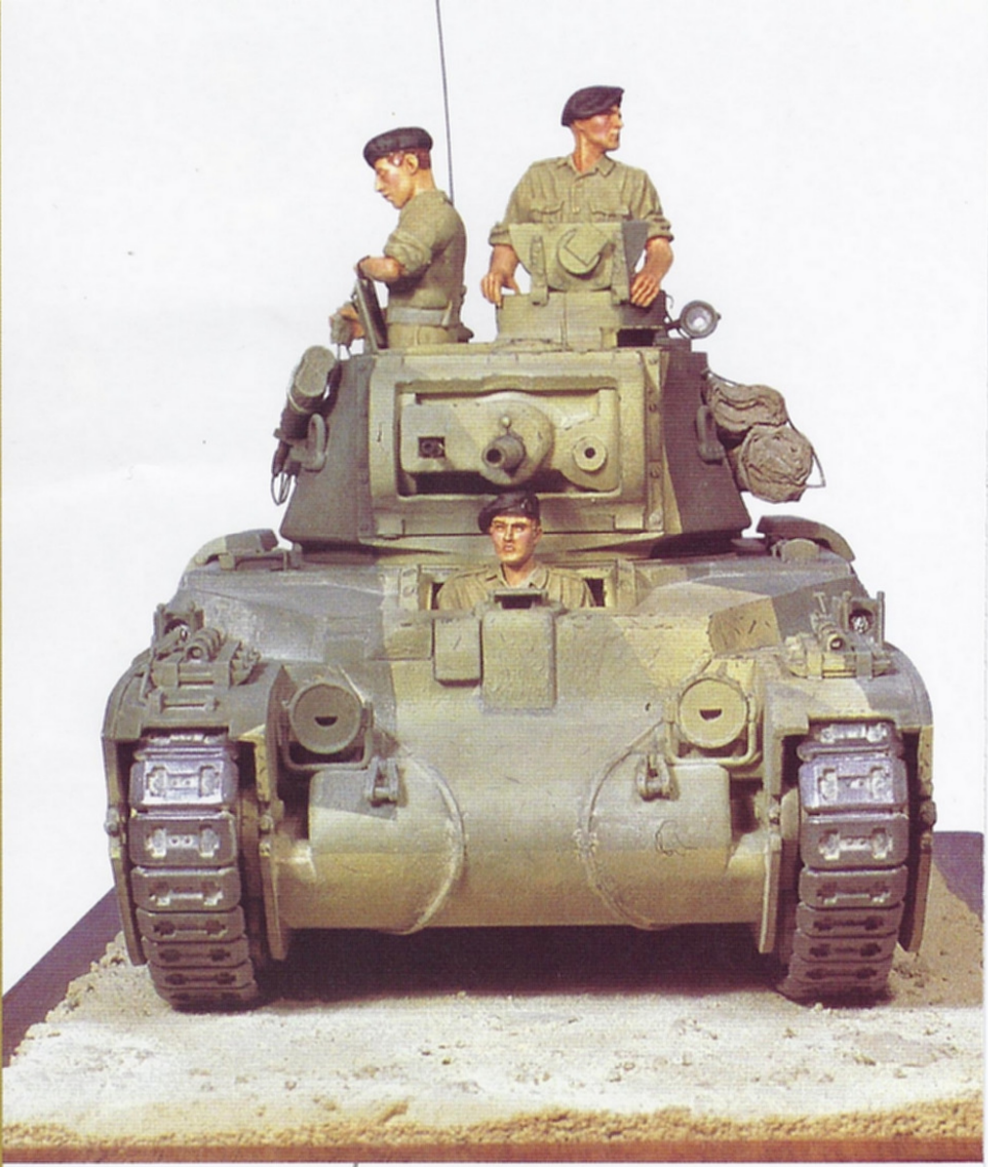
skills I hope to show that a fair representation of the Matilda II will transpire.

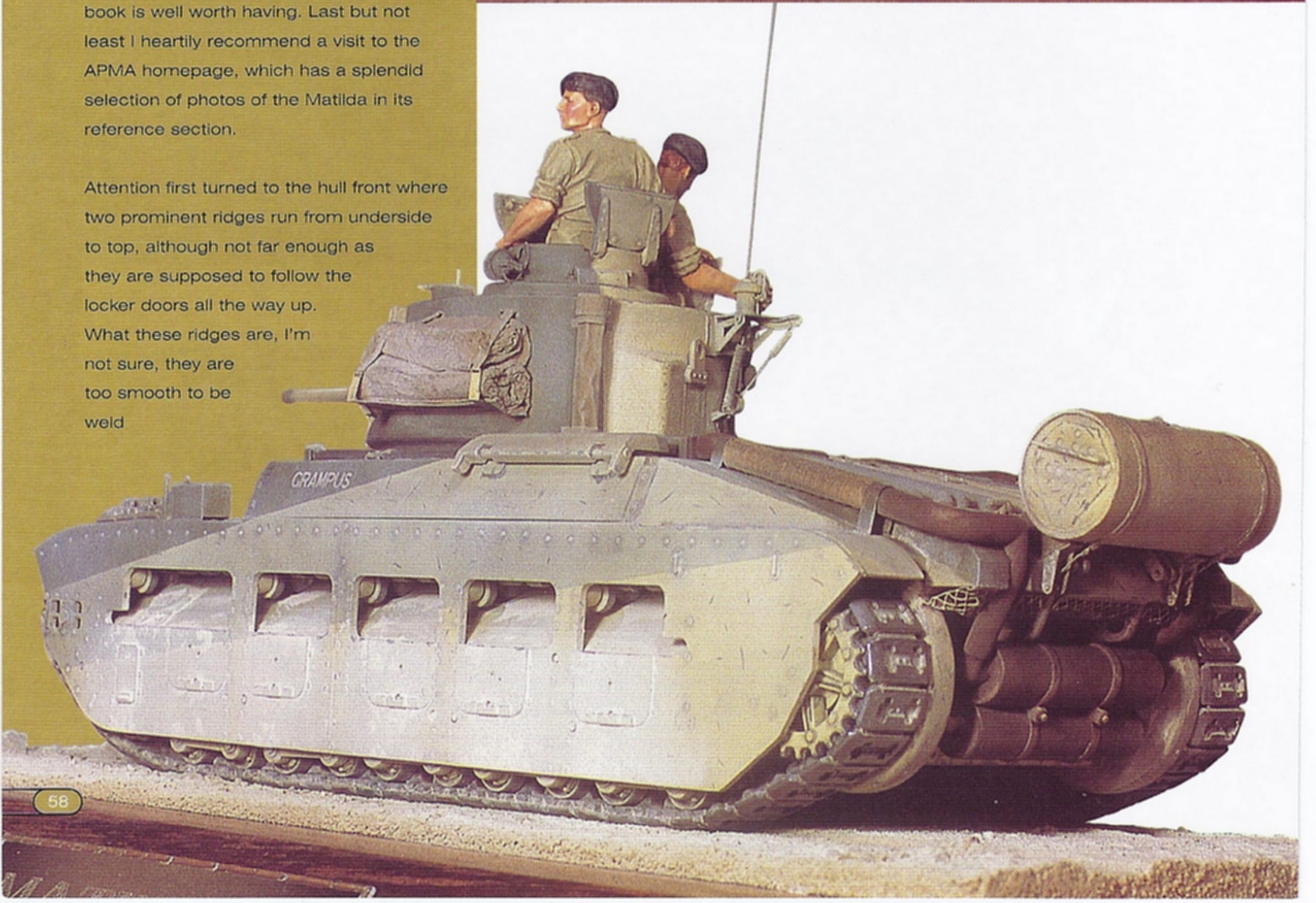
Aiding my efforts was a rather large amount of interior and exterior detail drawings obtained from the Tank Museum following quite a bit of correspondence with the librarian, David Fletcher. Mr. Fletcher must surely be one of the most helpful, and knowledgeable persons around, and has contributed a lot to whatever I might know about British armour.

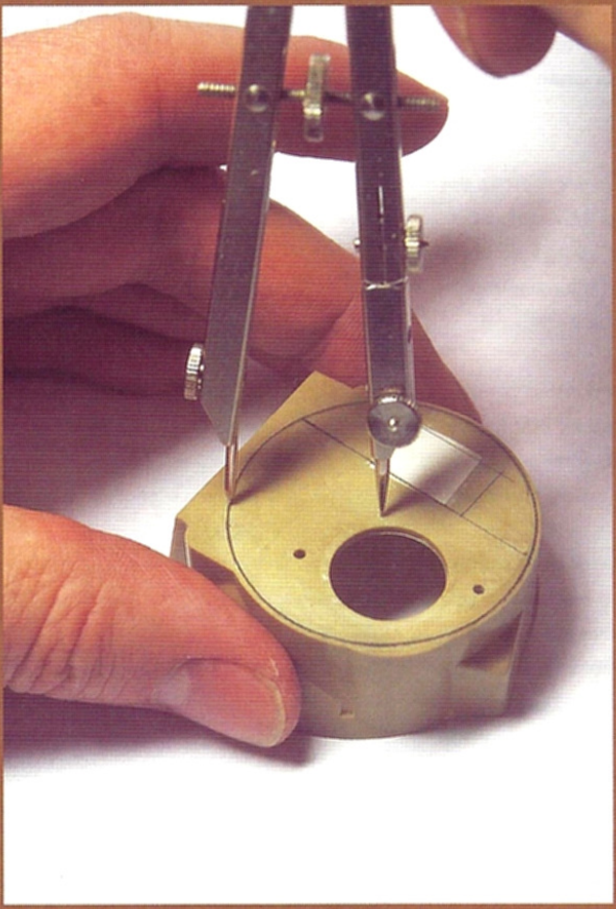
I would also strongly recommend Darlington Publications' "The Matilda Infantry Tank in Australian Service". As the title suggests this booklet concentrates on Aussie vehicles, but there are a lot of detail photos of general value.

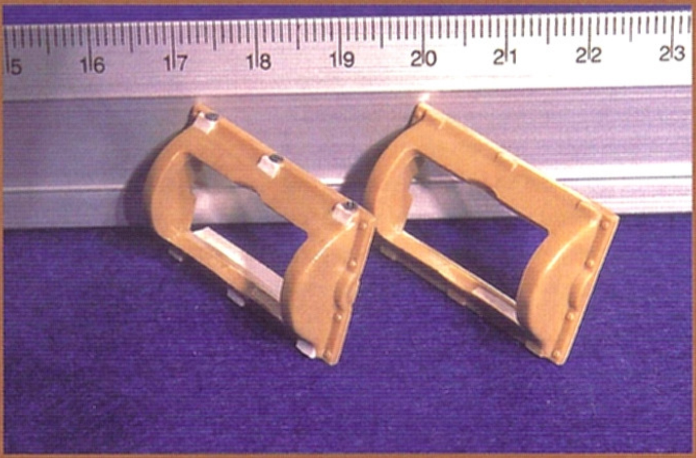
Osprey offer three useful titles; Vanguard 23: "British tanks in North Africa", New Vanguard 8: Matilda Infantry tank 1938 – 1945, and finally "Modelling the Matilda Infantry Tank". Unfortunately, at the time of writing, I have not seen the book last mentioned, but considering its most able contributors I feel pretty confident this book is well worth having. Last but not least I heartily recommend a visit to the APMA homepage, which has a splendid selection of photos of the Matilda in its reference section.

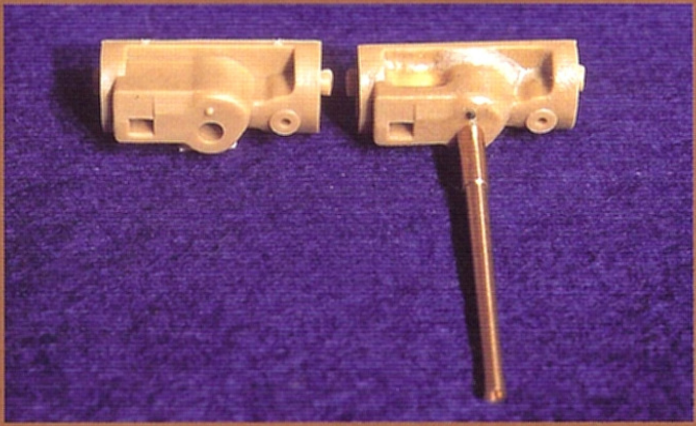
Attention first turned to the hull front where two prominent ridges run from underside to top, although not far enough as they are supposed to follow the locker doors all the way up. What these ridges are, I'm not sure, they are too smooth to be weld











beads, yet they show the position of the inside vertical armour plates-a mystery! When looking at head on photos of the Matilda it quickly becomes apparent that the ridges are too close together at the nose, creating an impossibly sharp angle if one were simply to extend them to the end of the locker doors. Thus construction started by scraping the ridges away, I then filled in the open sponson floors and glued the upper and lower hull parts together. After filling and sanding, new ridges from stretched sprue were glued in place. There are several join lines missing in the kit, two of them run at an angle forward from the drivers station, these were scribed as seen in the photos. The front portion of the tank was then given a rough cast look by applying thin liquid glue followed by stippling with a stiff brush.

Moving on to the sides I scribed two missing vertical join lines and glued four missing boltheads each side. The armoured covers for the fuel filler pipes either side were next, these hinged outwards and were in need of a few details. Using a new scalpel blade I scraped inside the cut-outs to accentuate the hinge pin and glued stopper bolts each end. Finishing off, hinge mounting plates were glued to the hull.

The exhaust pipes also need some attention, and with hindsight I ought to have scratch built them-oh well, next time! The rather feeble looking asbestos isolation was scraped off and replaced with dental lead foil. The entire exhaust was then mounted using some Eduard etched parts.

The auxiliary fuel tank was glued together and scraped clean of its mounting strips. I then made a cut out for the filler cap with a square section needle file. Filler cap, feed pipe and new mounting strips were added after which the fuel tank was fitted using Eduard parts.

It is worth noting that the auxiliary fuel tank was not a common sight, most probably only used when training or in transit.

The side armour panels received a few missing details, namely a vertical panel line and keyholes for all the inspection hatches, the position of these details may actually be found on the box art. Also missing are four track tensioning devices, these were built using scrap plastic, rod and resin hex nuts.

The kit tools leave a bit to be desired, and are best replaced. I lifted a shovel from Tamiya's Churchill kit and scratch built the rest, they were fitted to the tank using Eduard PE and dental lead foil straps. Eduard also provides the position lights and I added thin copper wire for leads. Four rods in front of these lights are also offered in the PE set, but being flat in profile they are quite useless. I filled the kit's mounting holes and drilled new smaller ones. Four pieces of thin brass wire were dipped in thick cyano repeatedly until "balls" had built up; these were then glued in front of the lights.

Apart from a few odd details, this finished the hull, it was time to move on to the real challenge; the turret.

Basically, the turret looks right, but it is sadly lacking in detail and what detail is present is naive and for the most part wrongly placed. Work started with cutting off all detail on the turret roof and filling in the loaders hatch opening. I intended to have the loader's hatch open, but as the photos show the kit has it all wrong. This done, I scribed the circular turret roof plate using a pair of compasses, starting lightly to get a true circle, and get a good groove going.

The turret roof consisted of two plates, so a dividing line was scribed to represent this. I drew on the position of the loader's hatch opening and cut this open using a mini-drill.

The turret roof was secured with flush fitting screws of two different dimensions. To simulate these I cut two different sized syringes and sharpened them. Using a twisting motion I made round imprints in the appropriate places. To finish off the illusion, I cut a slot in each screw using a new scalpel blade.

For the right side of the turret roof two circular cover plates were made, one cover a disused overflow vent, the other is the top of an internally operated signal lamp, for use in darkness when radio silence was required.

A piece of steel angle running across the turret roof was fashioned from strip and detailed with flush fitting screws as per the turret roof. The ventilator guard and dome were next, followed by the periscope mounting.
The loaders hatch has a shallow pyramidal shape, this was replicated by cutting and gluing four pieces of 0.25 mm plastic card together, adding details inside and out.

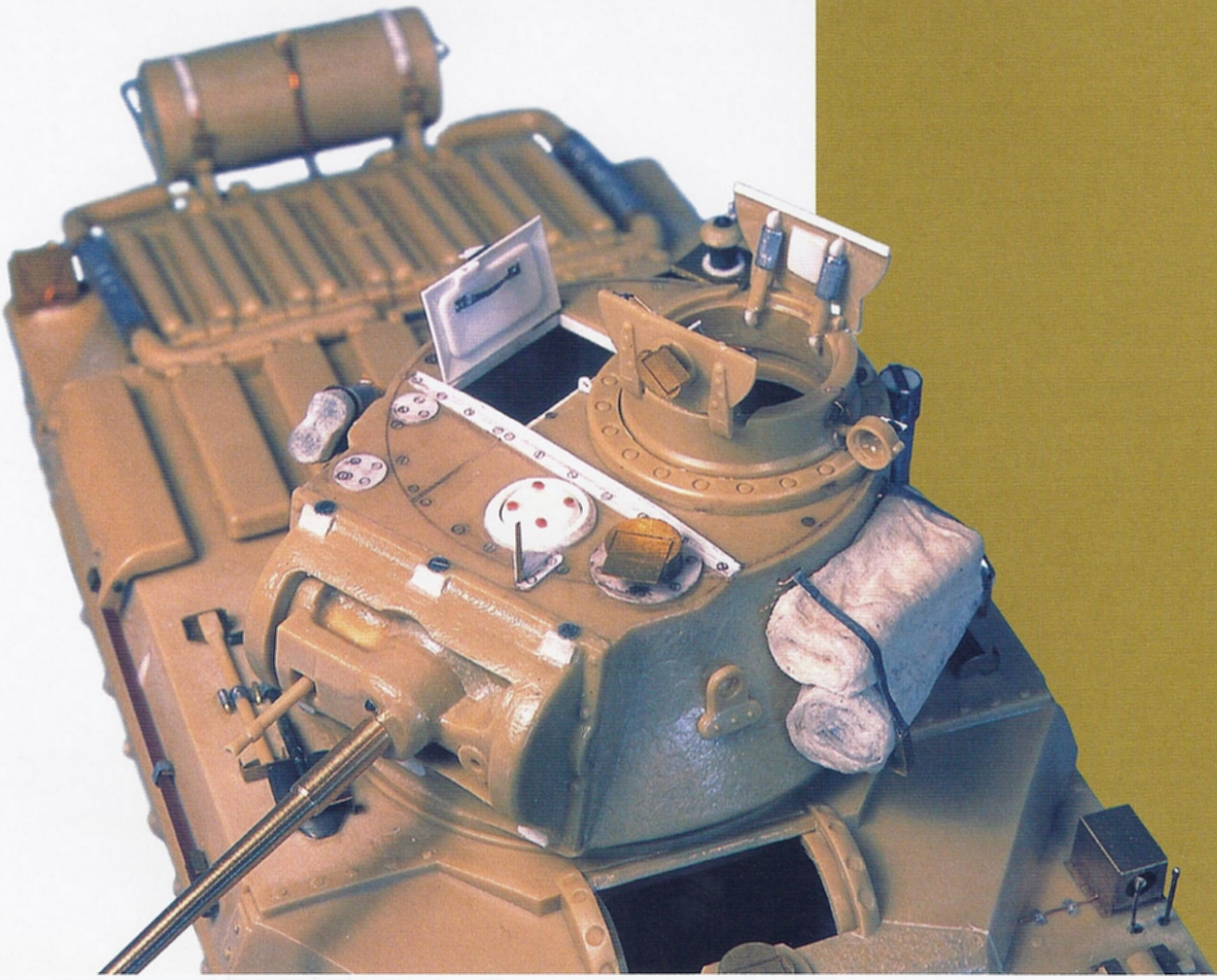
The bulge on the left side of the turret is slightly off, so I corrected this then applied thin liquid glue to the turret sides, and using a stiff brush I simulated a cast look. While this was drying I turned my attention to the commander's cupola, this too was to be open, so needed quite a bit of detail on the inside of the hatches. The searchlight needs a bit of tweaking so I hollowed it out with a small round drill-bit and added handles and wiring.

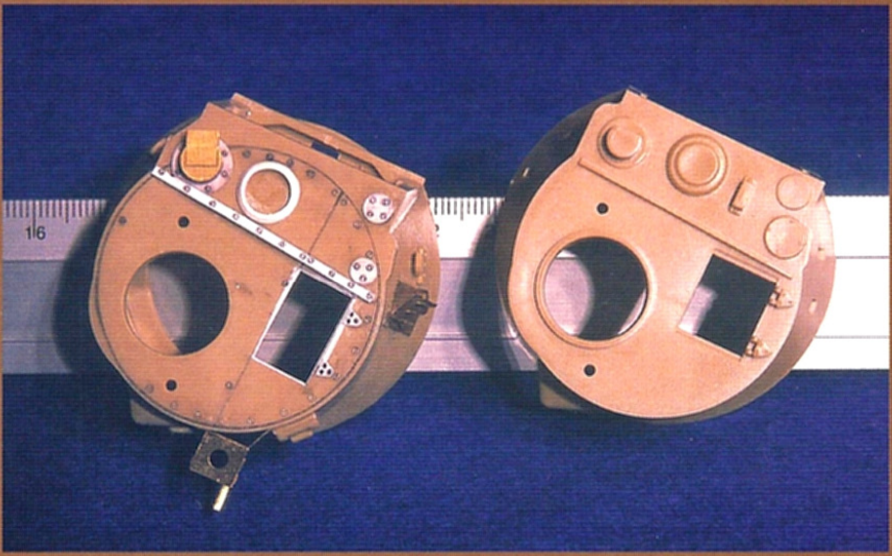
The gun mantlet has a rather complicated shape, and the kit part does not reflect this properly. I used putty to fill and round out the inside edges and shaped with a round burr with reference to the photos. The mantlet housing was detailed with its six large securing screws, and was also given a cast look.

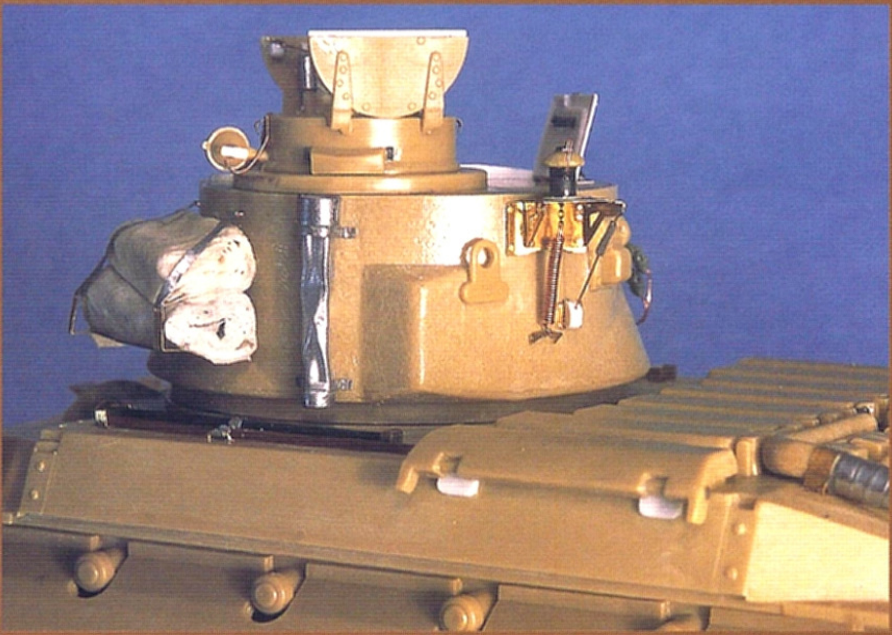
The kit's gun tube was replaced with a MR Models piece, and the turret was assembled. A new signal flag holder was fashioned from dental lead foil, the antenna base is combined from Eduard etch and add-ons from scratch, this applies to the smoke grenade launchers as well. Using a scalpel to give the pistol port parts better definition finished off the turret.

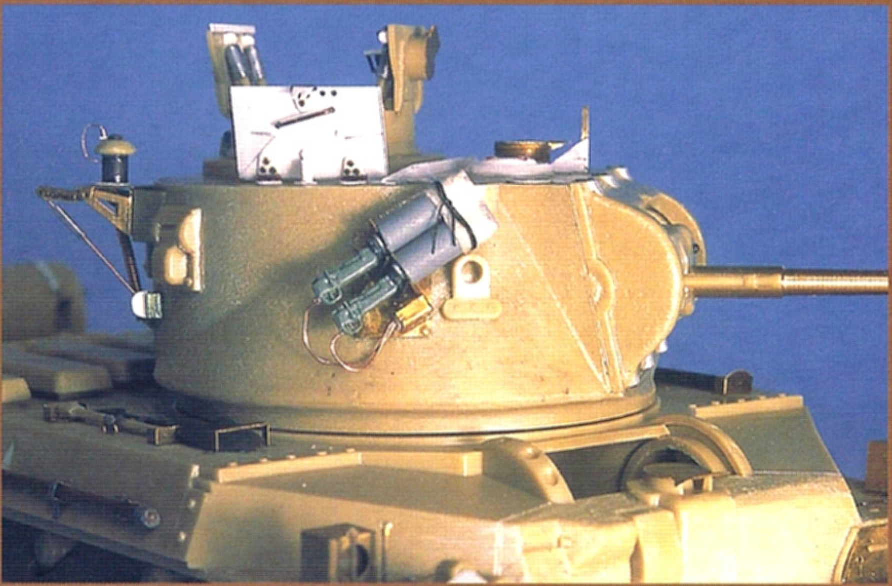
Finally I could break open some jars of paint and start stirring about!

As mentioned I wanted to replicate the famous 'Caunter' scheme on my model, like so many others I had grown up with an image of a tank in desert yellow, dark grey - and light blue no less! That was what the Airfix Matilda of my younger days showed









on it's box art, colour profiles featured it and museum vehicles "confirmed" it. It was a colour scheme too cool to be true.....

Enlightenment came in the shape of Mike Starmer's excellent and unassuming book "The Caunter Scheme", this really is essential reading, as are all books by Mike to anyone with an interest in British camouflage patterns and paint colours. The Caunter scheme was designed to throw enemy gunners off their aim by creating an optical illusion and confusion as to where the vehicle was moving. It was a very precise design, and as photos reveal the painters did their best to reproduce it as faithfully as possible on every vehicle.

My vehicle, being of 1940 stock would most probably be painted in Portland Stone, Silver Grey and Slate. Mike's book provides colour chips as well as mixes for these colours.

Portland Stone: 4 parts Humbrol 34 + 3 parts Humbrol 74 + a touch of Humbrol 33.

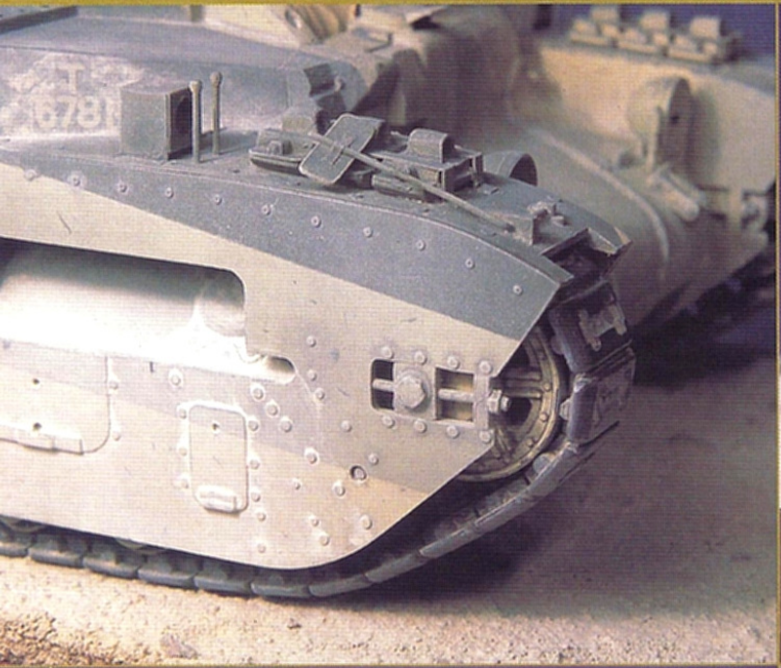
Silver Grey: 1 part Humbrol 34 + 1 part Humbrol 74 + a touch of Humbrol 27.

Slate: 6 parts Humbrol 86 + 1 part Humbrol 111 + a touch of Humbrol 33.

I mixed colours to match the colour chips in Mike's book, then all colours were lightened somewhat with white to look more in scale. To make painting easier I had not yet glued the side panels in place, this also allowed me to finish the tracks separately. A low tack tape aided in constructing the complex camouflage pattern.

With the paint dry I painted the return rollers, wheels and tracks with Humbrol Metal Cote Polished Steel, this dried quickly and was subsequently buffed with Kleenex to give it a worn metal shine. The tracks were put in place and I could finally glue the side armour panels on. I now brushed the entire model with Johnson Klear; this protects the paint against the hardships to come.

To dirty up my Matilda I made up a wash consisting of turpentine with a little raw umber and lamp black oil colours added. Thanks to the Johnson treatment the wash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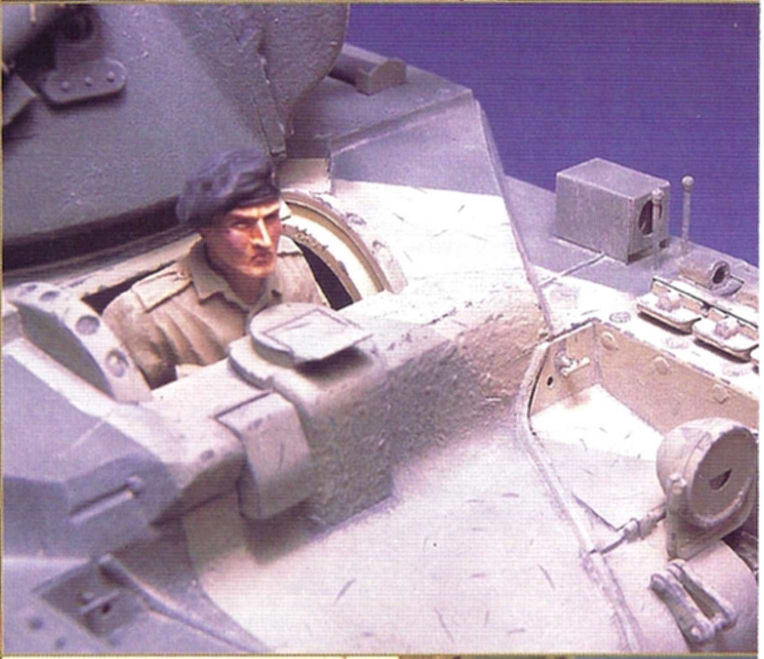
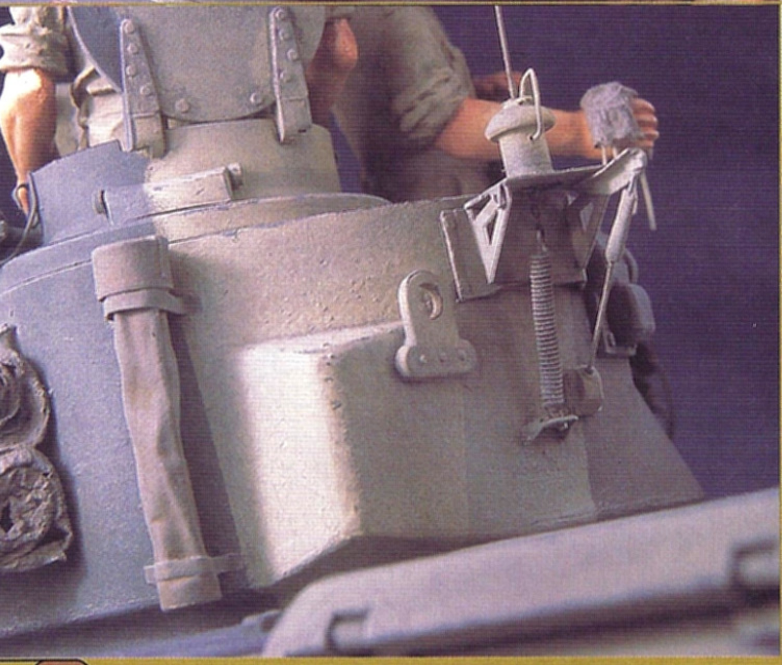
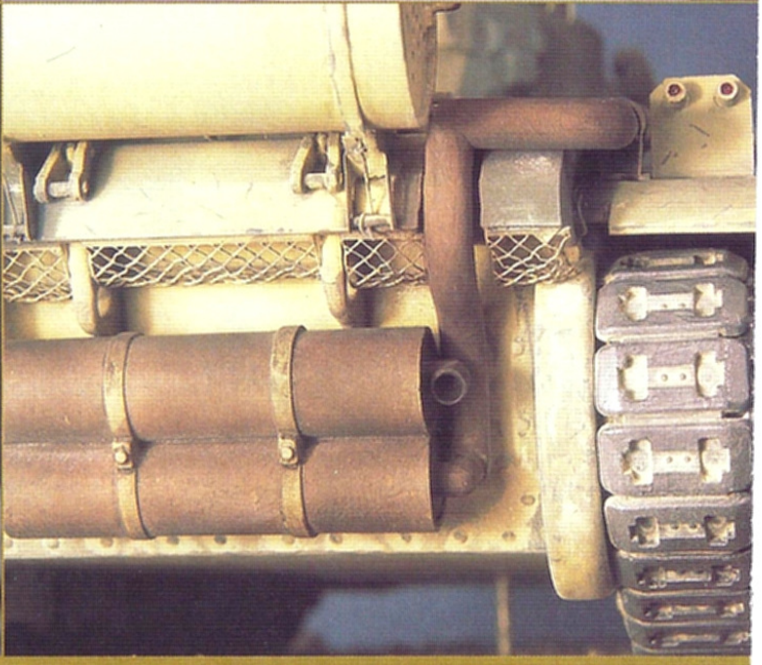






crept easily into all nooks and crannies, collected around bolt heads etc, this helped to create an illusion of shadow.

The hot and dry desert climate makes paint more prone to damage, thus a certain amount of chipping would not be out of place. This was achieved with a 10/0 brush, and a light touch. Some additional chipping was made with a Bruynzeel steel grey graphite pencil.

The dominant feature of vehicles in the Sahara must surely be copious amounts of sand and dust; this was to be replicated with pastel chalks. I ground a light mixture from several colours which would also be applied to the groundwork to blend desert and tank together.

First though, I wanted to accentuate the Matilda's prominent mud chutes. A portion of the ground pastels was mixed with water until I got it to the consistency of cream. This was smeared on the areas beneath the return rollers and all the way down the side panels. When dry I started scrubbing the layer off with a stiff brush and with selective brushing I was able to show sand and dust coming mainly from the chute openings. A part of the layer was also left on to simulate caked sand, then the remainder of the tank was treated to the pastel powder, this step replaced dry brushing.
Pastels were also used to darken the exhaust tubes and silencers, as well as replicating residue on the 2 pdr. gun.

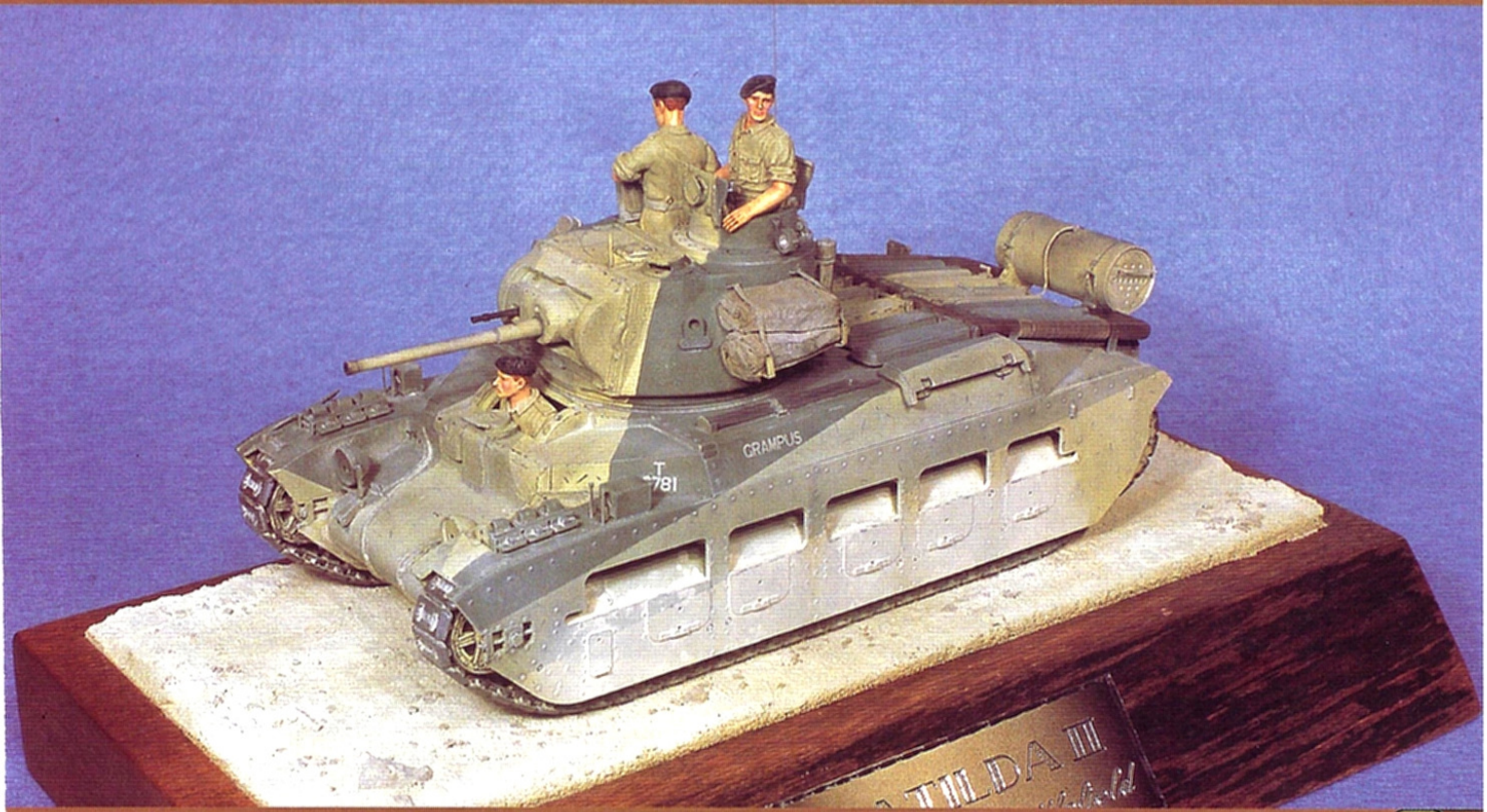
In between building sessions I had prepared a crew for my little tank; commander and driver were lifted from the Ultracast desert crew set. Unfortunately this otherwise splendid kit contains two identical torsos, so I converted the figure that comes in the Tamiya kit by scraping all the detail off and recreating them with putty and dental lead foil, replacing the head with a Hornet piece, as well as finding a new pair of arms in the spares box.
All skin areas were painted with oils, while the uniforms were painted with Humbrol enamels, ranging from M26 in the dark areas to M72 with white added on highlights.

After fitting the crew only the final detail remained; a radio antenna. This was cut from a guitar string and received pennants from lead foil, after painting it was secured to the antenna base with a drop of cyano.

Phew, finished at last! Looking at my model I feel it's a little bit like the curate's egg – good in places... There are many more corrective steps that could have been taken, but to finish an old kit like this you really have to draw the line somewhere!

All in all, looking at my Matilda I think it gives a fair representation of how these wonderful tanks appeared when they ruled the battlefields in Africa!

Special thanks this time really must go to Mike Starmer and Peter Brown. Peter is a treasure trove of vital information who always finds the right photo or detail or whatever you need. Mike effortlessly clears up whatever confusion you might have about timelines in British camouflage, colours and the like.
You can't really go wrong with these chaps on your side, thanks fellas!



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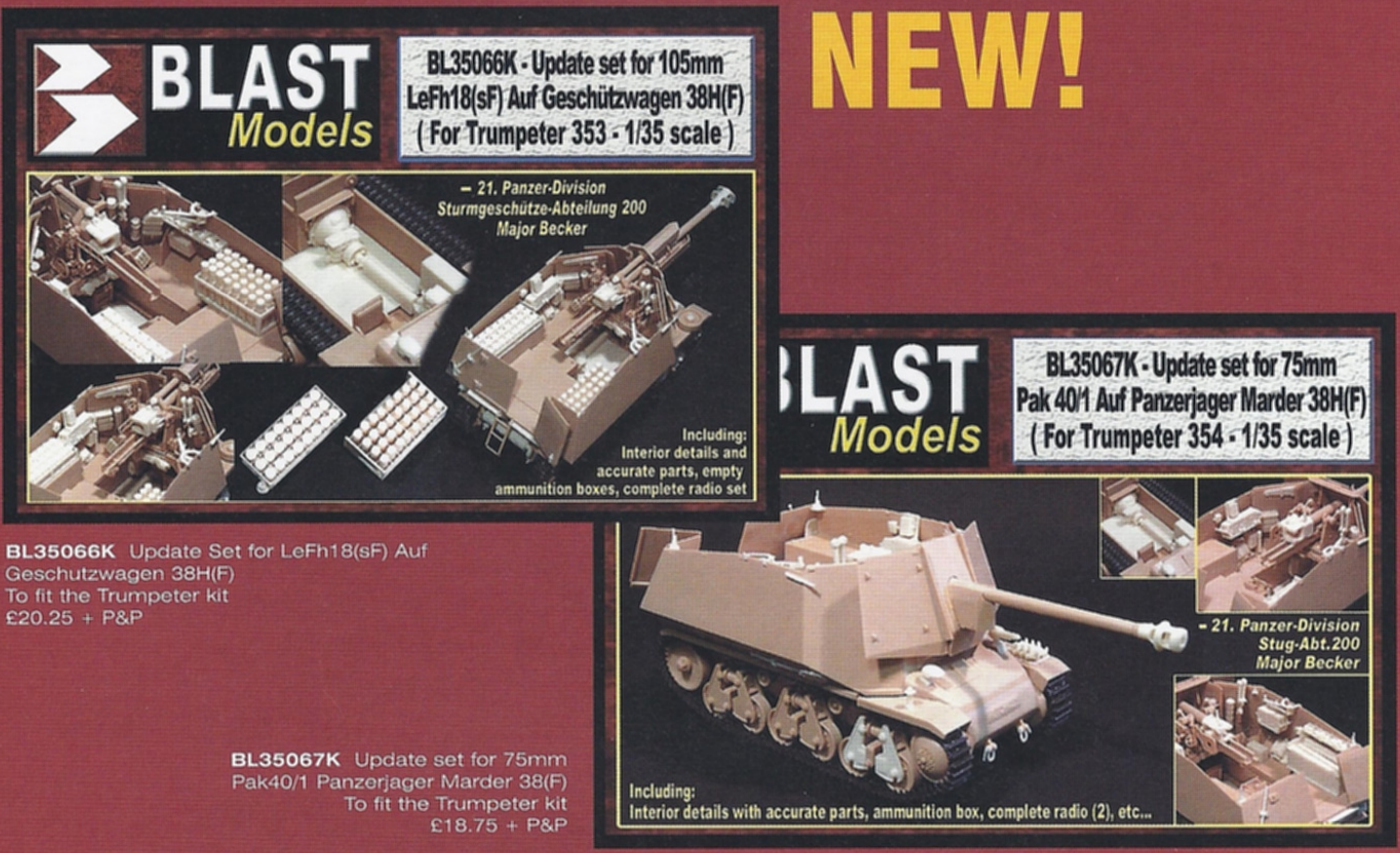

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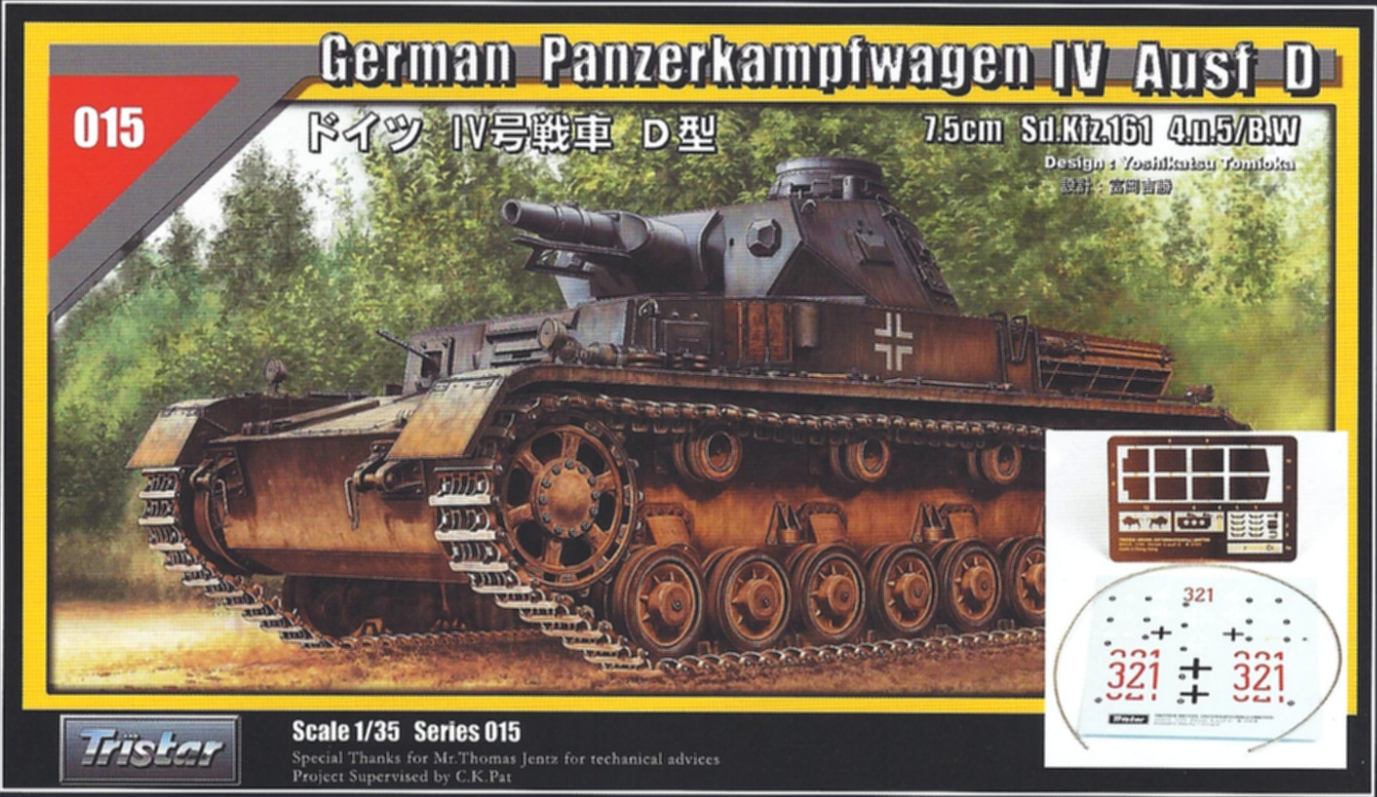
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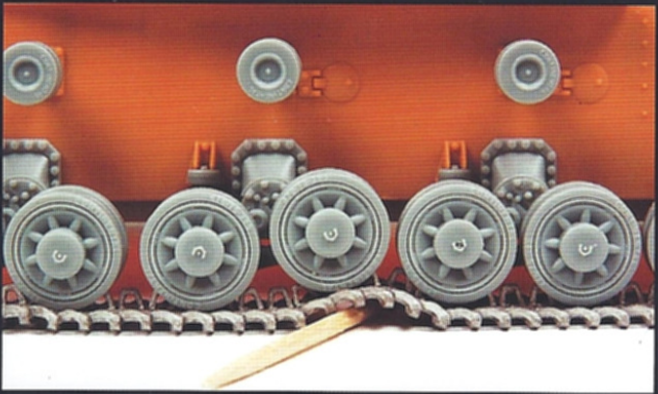

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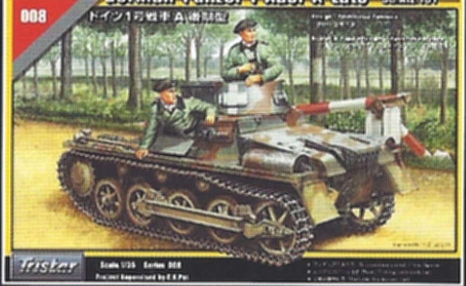
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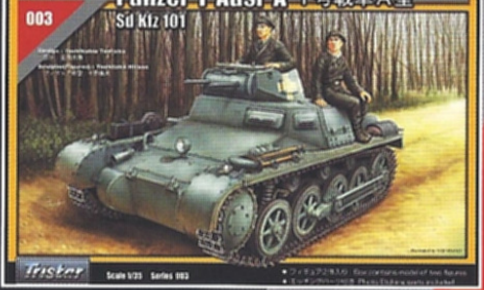
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